

Cinosam Stories

Roles – and How We Play Them

By WB Wally Zink

Whenever I am downhearted and disappointed with my role and station in life, I stop and think about little Jamie Scott. Jamie was trying out for a part in the fourth grade school play. His mother told me that he had his heart set on being in it, though she suspected that he would not be chosen. On the day the parts were assigned, Jamie rushed home, ran into the house and with excitement of a ten year old shouted, “Guess what Mom,” and then in words that have hung in my mind these many years and have been a lesson to me Jamie declared with pride, “I have been chosen to clap and cheer.”

It is recorded that Abraham Lincoln often visited hospitals to talk with wounded soldiers during the Civil War. On one such visit doctors pointed out a young soldier who was near death. Lincoln walked over to his bedside. “Is there anything I can do for you?” asked the President. Obviously the soldier did not recognize Lincoln, and with exerted effort he was able to whisper, “Would you please write a letter to my mother?” A pen and paper were given to the President and Lincoln carefully began to write down what the young man was able to say:

“My dearest mother, I was badly hurt while doing my duty. I am afraid I am not going to recover. Don’t grieve too much for me, please. Kiss Mary and John for me. May God bless you and father.” The soldier was too weak to continue, so Lincoln signed the letter for him and added, “Written for your son by Abraham Lincoln.” The young lad asked to see the note and was astonished when he discovered who had written it. “Are you really the President?” he whispered. “Yes I am.” Lincoln replied quietly. Then Lincoln asked if there was anything else that he could do?

“Would you please hold my hand?” the soldier asked. “It will help me see it through to the end.” In the hushed room, the tall gaunt President took the boy’s hand and silently held it until death came.

If there is a lesson in these two incidents it is simply this; it is not the roles we play in life but how well do we play the role we have?

A MAN PLUCK OFF HIS SHOE & GIVE IT TO HIS NEIGHBOR

In a small town in mid-19th century America a young man said to his wife, “Mary, you have a shawl you never use. May I have it?”

She was puzzled for a few moments, but got the shawl. He thanked her and left the house. She was also suspicious, because several evenings during the past few months he had left after dinner without any explanation. He was never gone long, and when he returned he seemed to have an inner peace about him. He said nothing, and neither did she.

About a week later, Mary was shopping in the village when she saw her shawl again. She was shocked. It was on the shoulders of a beautiful young lady. Angrily Mary followed the girl to a shabby shack. Mary knocked on the door. The girl opened it and smiled when she saw the visitor. She held the door open and Mary stomped in. As May

looked around she saw an elderly lady propped up on a cot. The lady smiled and said; "How nice of you to visit us." Mary was stunned. She did not really know what to say. The girl asked if she could fix her a cup of tea. Mary nodded and the girl turned to put a kettle on the stove.

While the water was heating, Mary said "I do not know exactly what to say, so I will tell you the truth. I saw my shawl on your daughter and I was furious. Last week my husband asked me for it, but didn't tell me why. I still don't understand how you have it." The mother said "We have no idea who left it. We have no idea who has been doing some nice things for us for the past several months. Perhaps now we can solve the mystery. It started soon after my husband died. We had no money and I am unable to work. And Nancy couldn't find a job. We were desperate. We had no food and no fuel. Then one morning when Nancy opened the door she found several packages of food, clothing and coal on the doorstep. You have no idea what that meant to us.

"A short time later, along with more packages, Nancy found a note telling her to see Mr. Tompkins, the lawyer, if she would like a job. She did and Mr. Tompkins hired her. He sent a doctor to see me, and he has been coming regularly ever since. He won't take any money. And we still find packages, but have no idea where they come from."

They drank their tea and chatted pleasantly for some time. The mysterious packages were mentioned from time to time. Suddenly Mary asked: "Was your husband a Mason?" "Yes, he was," said the lady. "He loved his Lodge. I don't think he ever missed a meeting." A short time later Mary left, promising to visit often.

After dinner that evening, Mary worked on a quilt she was making while her husband read. She looked up from her work and said "I think I learned the great secret of Masonry today." Her husband looked at her with alarm and asked, "And what is it?" Mary answered, "To do good and not say anything about it."

The Masons of that small town had plucked off their shoes to help those in need. SHOULD WE DO ANYTHING LESS? Millions of great men have been and are members of the Craft. Many have become truly Master Masons. But more have not. Actually, only a few Freemasons over the years literally plucked off a shoe and worked for the Fraternity. Imagine what a wonderful difference it should make throughout the world if only those millions who have received the Degrees would fulfill their obligations. Will you ask yourself - "Have I sincerely plucked off my shoe in testimony of my fidelity to Freemasonry?" If your answer is "No," will you consider plucking off your shoe? Will you work for your fellowman through Freemasonry? If you will, you'll make a difference for the better in today's uncertain world.

Extracted verbatim from the website of metropolitan lodge # 352, Downey, California

A Masonic Story

A salesman breaks down in a remote country lane, a farmer in the adjacent field comes over and they discover that they are "Brothers". The salesman is concerned as he has an important appointment in the local town: "Don't worry says the farmer you can use my car, I will call a friend and get the car

repaired while you go to the appointment” Off goes the salesman and a couple of hours later he returns but unfortunately the car is awaiting a part which won’t arrive until the next morning. “It’s not a problem,” says the Farmer, “use my telephone and re-schedule your first appointment tomorrow, stay with us tonight and I’ll see that the car is done first thing!” The farmers’ wife prepares a wonderful meal and they share a glass of fine single malt during an excellent evening, the salesman sleeps soundly and when he awakes there is his car, repaired and ready to go. After a full English breakfast the salesman thanks them both for the hospitality. As he and the farmer walk to his car he turns and asks “my brother, thank you so much but I have to ask, did you help me because I am a Mason?” “No” was the reply, “I helped you because I am a Mason” Travel well my brothers,

Caught Cold Handed By WB Wally Zink

A woman, preparing to entertain dinner guests, went to the local supermarket to buy food. She stopped at the meat counter and asked the attendant for a large chicken. He reached down into the cold storage compartment, and took out the last chicken that he had, and placed it on the scale. “This one weighs four pounds, ma’am,” he said. Pausing a moment the woman replied, “Well, I am not sure that will be big enough. Do you have any that are bigger?” The attendant took the chicken off of the scale and placed it back into the compartment. He then pretended to search through the ice for another one, and then brought out the same bird, discreetly applying some finger pressure to the scale. “Ah,” he said with a smile, “This one weighs six pounds.” Well, I am not too sure” said the woman with a frown. “I’ll tell you what, wrap them up for me, I will take them both.”

Honesty is the hinge on which our relationships with others swings. It is not merely honesty in action, but honesty in intention. It is being fair and truthful with others. The foundation for a successful life is built on being honest and trustworthy at our job, in our relationships and in our business. It requires and demands much less effort to go through life each day as someone who is truthful than as one who is deceitful. We can go far in life with personal integrity and we will get nowhere without it.

At one place in the ritual we have heard the words intoned, “And to your neighbor in living by the square that you would do unto him as you would wish that he should do unto you.” Not bad advice. For as the old proverb advises, “When you never shame, you never have to explain.”

The Test

Author Unknown

Several years ago, the story is told of a Mason who always wore his Masonic ring and lapel pin when in public. On some occasions, he rode the bus from his home to the downtown area. On one such trip and when he sat down, he discovered the driver had accidentally given him a quarter too much change.

As he considered what to do, he thought to himself, "You'd better give the quarter back. It would be wrong to keep it." Then he thought, "Oh, forget it, it's only a quarter; who would worry about this little amount." Anyway, the transit company gets too much fare; they will never miss it. Accept it as a 'gift from God' and keep quiet.

When his stop came, he paused momentarily at the door, then he handed the quarter to the driver and said, "Here, you gave me too much change."

The driver with a smile replied, " I noticed your Masonic ring and lapel pin. I have been thinking lately about asking a Mason how to join. I just wanted to see what you would do if I gave you too much change. You passed the test. Can you tell me how to become a Mason?"

When the Mason stepped off the bus, he said a silent prayer, "Oh God, Grand Architect of the Universe, I almost sold you and my beloved Masons out for a mere quarter."

Our actions are the only Masonic creed some will ever see. This is a really almost scary example of how people watch us as Masons and may put us to the test even without us realizing it! Always be diligent, whether it be at the theater, restaurant, grocery, service station or just driving in traffic.

Remember, whether it be a lapel pin, a ring, or an emblem on the car, you carry the name of our great fraternity on your shoulders whenever you call yourself a Mason. You never can tell who might be watching!

"A Freemason In Exile"

by Bro. Richard J. Filippi.

Reprinted in part from the December 2006 Philalethes Magazine.

Five years ago I attended a special course on Civil-Military relations. The course was attended by ranking military and political members of various Middle Eastern countries. The few American officers attending were there to assist and sponsor our guests and make their stay a warm and positive experience. As one of these officers, I got to know several of the students during their two-week stay in Florida. Included in the group were four members representing the Iraqi National Congress (the then U.S. back pseudo-Iraqi government in exile). Among them was a former Iraqi Lt. Colonel who had escaped Iraq with his family after the 1990-91 Gulf War. Yarab was of Kurdish heritage and joined the ill fated, U.S. encouraged, uprising after the 1991 armistice with Saddam. He was imprisoned and only through the bravery and sacrifice of his wife and family, was able to escape and make their way to Canada via Syria, Jordan and Europe. Yarab had joined the Iraqi National Congress in hopes of one day returning a free man to his beloved country. We had many enjoyable discussions over dinner. We spoke about our upbringing, our children and our hopes and dreams. He told me that he wished one day to take me to his

favorite seafood restaurant in Baghdad. This would be a good thing.

Returning to our guest rooms one evening we shared an elevator. Yarab abruptly stopped the elevator, turned and looked me square in the eyes and accusingly said, "You're one of them? - Aren't you!" I was taken back - I didn't know what he was implying. Was I what: an American, a spy, a capitalist, or a Republican? My mind raced, trying to discover an answer to his question. He then looked down toward my right hand and motioned with his eyes. Ah. Now I knew what he was asking. I responded with a muted, but neutral "Yes." At that he grasped me in an enthusiastic bear hug and with a smile beaming ear-to-ear said, "So am I - brother!" At that point, our relationship moved to another level.

He was a Freemason. He told me that to be a Freemason in Saddam's Iraq meant certain death and imprisonment of your entire family. He knew a few other Iraqi Freemason's, by their signs, words or deeds, but there were no Lodges or meetings in Iraq. Yarab told me he felt his grandfather, who was also an officer, was a Freemason. His grandfather never said he was but many years later, after Yarab was Raised, he remembered some of his grandfathers now relevant phrases, gestures and deeds from his childhood. From that moment on we were as childhood friends. Later we lost contact and I've wondered if Yarab ever got back to Baghdad.

I've gained a new respect for the tenets of Freemasonry. It is easier for us to make the commitment to a belief or organization when that choice isn't life threatening. Could we do the same if our lives and families were put in extreme jeopardy? It is a sobering thought and one that caused me to renew my vows and dedication to the brotherhood.

On Thursday, On Dec.14, 2005, the front-page of the San Francisco Chronicle reported that two days before a female humpback whale had been found. She had been entangled in a spider web of crab traps and lines and would die. A fisherman spotted her a few miles outside the Golden Gate bridge and called in an environmental group for help. Within a few hours, the rescue team arrived and determined that she was so bad off that the only way to save her was to dive in and untangle her. This was a very dangerous proposition as one slap of the tail could kill a rescuer.

Hundreds of pounds of traps that caused her to struggle to stay afloat weighted her down. She also had hundreds of yards of line rope wrapped around her body, her tail and her torso, and a line tugging in her mouth.

The team worked for hours with curved knives and eventually freed her. When she was free, the divers say she swam in what seemed like joyous circles. She then came back to each and every diver, one at a time, and nudged them, pushed them gently around and thanked them. Some said it was the most incredibly beautiful experience of their lives. The person who cut the rope out of her mouth says her eye was following him the entire time, and he will never ever be the same.

We as Masons are blessed and fortunate to be surrounded by Brothers who will help us get untangled from the things that are binding us. Things like depression, alcoholism, envy, lust, self-indulgence, greed, et cetera.

May you always know the joy of giving and receiving gratitude and love

They tell an interesting story about how Tahattawan Lodge in Littleton, Massachusetts, got its new Temple - a former Roman Catholic Church. It seems that when a large new Catholic Church was built in town, the old one was put up for sale. The Lodge needed new quarters, but could not afford the amount asked for the vacant church. In fact it was lacking about \$50,000.00 of the price tag.

One night, though, as the Brethren were gathering to open in their old, cramped, rented quarters, one of the members came in with the news that a little girl had been hit by a car and the hospital had an urgent need for whole blood. The Lodge was some three hours late in opening because everyone went to the hospital to donate a pint of blood.

When word of this reached Cardinal Cushing, it is reported that he said, in effect, "If the Masons can respond like that for one of ours, we can knock \$50,000.00 off the price of that church - if they still want it."

They did! And he did!

To convert the Catholic Church into a Masonic Temple took a lot of work by the members of Tahattawan Lodge who did much of their own remodeling. The "stations of the Cross" which were painted on the walls were neatly painted over with Square and Compasses. The pews were removed and the Master's and Warden's stations were constructed. While the work was going on, curious parishioners who had formerly worshipped there, stopped by to see the work progress, including Father Murphy.

One day after a hole for the light over the altar had been made; one curious visitor asked what the hole in the ceiling was for.

"Oh!" answered one of the volunteer workers, "When Father Murphy came in today and saw what we had done to the "Stations of the Cross", and he went right through the roof."

-Taken from "Tied to Masonic Apron Strings" by Stewart M.L. Pollard. Re-printed in The Sojourner, a monthly publication of The National Sojourner

HIRAMIC MONOLOGUE

(A man is sitting at a large table covered with plans and drawings. He has a pair of compasses in his hand, and is describing an arc on a design. The telephone rings. He takes no notice except to frown. It rings again. Exasperated, he lifts the receiver....)

Hello! Hiram here! (pause) Hello! Hiram of Tyre speaking!

No, no not his Majesty! His nibs is up in the hills, where it is

cool. This is Hiram Abif. Who is calling?

Adoniram! Great to hear from you! Where are you? What are you up to?

Lebanon! You lucky son of a camel! And in charge of the sawmill operation too! That's great! No wonder we're getting all the wood products up to specification! Wish I could say the same about the quarry stuff! No labor problems I hope?

How many thousand? I know there's a policy of full employment in Lebanon, but that's ridiculous! What are you doing with them all?

One working and ten looking on? Well that system isn't unique you know, Adda.

We're moving along all right, I suppose, but I am getting a lot of trouble over the rationing. I said at the start that giving these young boys a weekly allowance of corn, wine and oil would never work. We supplied them with little hand mills for the corn, and field ovens for the baking--but they just wouldn't use them. As soon as they got their ration each week, they flogged the corn for the wine, with predicable result. We got some pretty funny looking ashlar! However, things are better now. We do our own baking and issue the rations already cooked-- but there is still a lot of fiddling going on.

I'm worried to death, really. We have this deadline for the opening, but it will be a miracle if everything is ready for the dedication. The trouble is that YOU KNOW WHO can never make up his mind on detail. He's continually changing the plans. Now after we thought we had everything under control, he has this brilliant idea about the Memorial Pillars.

That's right, MEMORIAL PILLARS! You know, the Fire and Cloud and all that jazz!

Well, it was too late to incorporate them into the actual building, and so they'll have to be placed outside the porchway or entrance. His idea is to make them out of METAL, as if stone wasn't good enough. There's only one place I know of to cast something that big, and that's down there between Succoth and Zeredatha; you know the claygrounds on the bottom land of the Jordan. Transportation will be a nightmare, uphill all the way; and just one jolt, and the things will crack.

No, I haven't a clue who he thinks he's going to get to supervise the casting. Oh, and I forgot to tell you, he wants them formed hollow, with only a hand's breadth of material. And he wants to put archives in them...Yes, archives; scrolls of vellum and parchment and so on. Can you imagine keeping the files in there? Once these

young clerks and secretaries get in there and start messing about, they'll be in there all day!

We tried getting the names of the pillars out of him, so we could include them in the casting, but he'll only give us the name of one. That's to be named after his great great grandfather. But he's being very coy about the other one. I think he's going to announce it on the day. Probably going to honor one of the officials who take part in the ceremony. You know how he is, Adda. It's always the fellow who can do a good piece of ritual that gets the honor, not the one who's been doing all the background work. Gawd, I hate this Masonic politics!

But my main trouble here is the unreliability of the overseers. Some of them can't even read a blueprint! Do you know, every morning when I get into the office (and that's about the sixth hour), there's a line up of Fellow-crafts, supposedly overseers, asking me to explain detail that should be obvious to anyone competent. I spend half my time doing work that should be done by the overseers. I tell you, Adda, I'm convinced that if ever I took a day off, the whole project would be plunged into utter confusion.

Apart from that, the overseers are quite incapable of carrying out the trade testing. This means that a lot of fair workmen who should be getting trade pay are not receiving any differential-- and that's causing a bit of bad feeling. And when the work ends here, and they move on to other jobs, they won't have any evidence of their grade.

As a matter of fact, I had three of them in my office the other day who were very rude to me about the delay in their trade testing. I promised them faithfully that I would carry out their test today, after the midday break. So we'll have to see about that!

Now is there anything else on your mind? I don't want to appear rude, but it is almost time for the noon whistle. I like to make a bit of an inspection during the lunch break. Also, Phase one is completed now, you know, and it's cool and peaceful and quiet in there; great view over the valley from the gateways. Not a soul in sight and it gives me a chance to collect my thoughts. Only moment of quiet I'll have all day! Then after a few minutes there, have a bit of bread and cheese, and maybe a pomegranate, and then I'll be all set for the afternoon.

Oh, yeah, sure! I'm okay! It's just the pressure, the constant pressure. It gets to me! I sometimes feel I don't have much time...I don't have much time. But it'll soon be over with!

Well, it's been nice talking to you! We must get together when you're in town again. Take care now! Bye!

From "The Grand Design" by Wallace McLeod
Copyright 1991

'Abe Lincoln's Axe'

By Jim Tresner

The story is told of a historian, recording folk history in Illinois in the 1970's. Several people in the countryside had told him of a farm family which possessed the axe Abraham Lincoln had used when splitting logs for a living as a young man. The historian finally found the farm, and found the farmer in the yard splitting wood for the living room fireplace. He asked him about the story.

"Yes," said the farmer, "it's true. Abe Lincoln lived around here as a young man, and he worked for a while splitting wood for my great-great-grandfather. Happened he'd bought a new axe from a peddler the day before Abe Lincoln came to work here, and he gave it to Lincoln to use. We've kept it ever since."

"That's a real historical treasure," said the historian. "It really ought to be in a museum. Would you mind going into the house and bringing it out so I could see it?" "Oh we know it's important," said the farmer. "I take it to the school from time to time and tell the kids about it and Lincoln. Seems to sorta make him real for them. But I don't have to go into the house, I've got it here." He handed the horrified historian the axe he had been using.

"You mean you're still USING it?!" "Sure thing. An axe is meant to be used." The historian looked it over carefully. "I must say your family has certainly taken good care of it." "Sure, we know we're protecting history. Why we've replaced the handle twice and the head once."

In many ways, Masonry is like Abe Lincoln's axe. All of us tend to assume that Masonry has always been the way it was when we joined. We become fiercely protective of it in that form. But, in fact, we've done more than replace the handle twice and the head once. For example, the Eulogy to Mother was added to the stairway lecture in Oklahoma sometime between 1924 and 1930. Almost no other state uses it. When Oklahoma Territory and Indian Territory merged to form the Grand Lodge of Oklahoma, major changes in the ritual (both esoteric and exoteric) were made for at least 6 years as the two rituals were combined.

When Brothers George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, and Paul Revere (and the other Masons of their era and for decades to come) joined the Fraternity, they did not demonstrate proficiency by memorizing categorical lectures. Instead, the same evening they received a degree they sat around a table with the other Brethren of the Lodge. The Brethren asked each other questions and answered them for the instruction of the new Brother. They asked him questions, and helped him with the answers. The discussion continued until they were confident that he understood the lessons of the Degree. They then taught him the signs and tokens, and he was proficient. In many cases, he took the next Degree the next night.

The system of demonstrating proficiency by memorizing categorical lectures is less than about twice as old as the average Mason in Oklahoma--not too long a span in the 1,000 year history of the Fraternity. The custom of allowing 28 days to pass between

Degrees came about for no other reason than the fact that most lodges only met every 28 days, on the nights of the full moon. There was no mystery behind that. Very few horses come equipped with head- lights, and only on nights of a full moon could people see well enough to leave their homes in the country and come into town for a meeting safely.

The names of the 3 ruffians have changed at least 3 times since the Master Mason Degree was created around 1727. More importantly, the nature and purpose of the Fraternity has changed radically over time. It certainly is no longer a protective trade association, nor a political force amounting almost to a political party, but it has been those over its long history. So yes, Masonry changes. It changes fairly frequently and sometimes dramatically. Far from being a bastion of conservative resistance to change, through most of its history it has been a major change agent fostering revolutions in political life (the American revolution, for example) and social life.

It created the tax-supported public school system. It created homes for the elderly and orphanages, and then worked for the sort of social legislation to make those widespread. It sought economic development for states and communities. Until the late 1940's and 50's, it was one of the most potent forces for change in America. And Masonry is like Abe Lincoln's axe in another way. For, although the handle and head had been replaced, that axe was still the one used by Abe Lincoln in truth if not in fact.

The farmer used it to teach. He told children about it and about Abe Lincoln. He helped make the past real to them, so that they could learn the great values of honesty and hard work which Lincoln typified. It's the same with Masonry. In spite of the many changes which have already happened and the changes which are bound to happen in the future--for Masonry, like any living thing, must change and grow or die--it is still the same. Its essence the lessons it teaches, the difference it makes in the lives of men, that great moment of transformation which is the goal of Masonry, when a man becomes something new and better than he was when he came in the door as a candidate.

That essence cannot and will not be lost, as long as Brothers meet in the true Masonic spirit, to work and learn and study and improve themselves and the world. That's Masonry. And like Abe Lincoln's axe, it was meant to be used, not to rust away in a museum case. That use keeps it bright and sharp and Masonic, no matter how often the handle and head need to be replaced.

The Oklahoma Mason April-May, 1995

That Which was Lost

By Brother Thomas W. Olzak

Brother Johnson slowly sealed the envelope he held in his trembling fingers. He tried to keep his hands still, but the powerful emotions filling him easily overcame his futile attempt. After all, the envelope contained a letter he didn't think he would ever have to write.

Seven years ago, Brother Johnson returned from a military tour in Germany. While in Germany, he was raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason in a "military lodge". It was a new lodge (less than 10 years old), but the Spirit of Freemasonry was very strong there. For hours, Brother Johnson sat talking with Past Masters and other interested brethren about the meaning of Freemasonry. The Spirit of Freemasonry that

pervaded that small lodge quickly filled Brother Johnson. Not only did he carry a dues card, he was also a Mason in his heart.

When Brother Johnson's tour in Germany ended, he was discharged from the army. He returned to his hometown and started a new life. It wasn't long before he met a Brother who belonged to a local lodge. He invited Brother Johnson to a stated meeting that Friday night. He enthusiastically accepted.

During the next few weeks, Brother Johnson became a familiar face at the Lodge. He became active in the Fellowcraft Team, and he took part in the degree work. Attending Lodge helped fill a void in Brother Johnson's life - a void created when he left his Lodge in Germany. But, something was still missing. It couldn't be the Temple. In Germany, his Lodge met in a small dining room in the back of a guest house. Each week the Brothers gathered before the meeting to unpack the Lodge furniture to set up the stations. When the Master closed, all the Lodge paraphernalia was placed back in the closet until the next meeting. This Lodge met in a beautiful old Temple.

It wasn't the size of the Lodge. The membership in the local Lodge numbered over 700. In Germany, Brother Johnson was the ninety-eighth member added to the roles. Although that which was lost eluded Brother Johnson, he decided to petition for affiliation. He was accepted by his new Masonic family. Shortly thereafter, he was appointed Junior Steward.

For almost 7 years Brother Johnson labored in the quarries of his new Lodge. As time passed, that which was lost began to show itself. He caught glimpses of it when a Past Master refused to take part in the ritual because he had "already done his part for the Lodge" - even though several walking parts remained vacant during the Master Mason Degree. He saw it again each time a Brother complained that the Lodge hadn't repaid him with office or honors for his services. They owed him. Until they made it up to him, he just wouldn't attend Lodge. Again it showed itself each time the Master Mason Degree was performed with disrespect; with levity or lack of preparation. And finally, he caught a glimpse of it each time expediency and personal ambition won out over the needs and principles of the Fraternity.

Shortly after his election to the office of Senior Warden, Brother Johnson realized what it was that the Lodge had lost. It had been hard to find because it wasn't something tangible. It wasn't big and heavy like the ashlar that sat in the front of the Lodge room. It wasn't colorful and ornate like the chapters and globes that adorned the Fellowcraft Pillars. On the contrary, it was simple and delicate. It can be found only in the hearts of those who truly love the Craft. It was the Spirit of Freemasonry. It is this spirit that makes a group of dedicated men a Lodge of Freemasons. You can easily tell the Lodge that has it. If you take away all the ornaments, the symbols, and all the other implements normally found in a Temple, the Lodge whose members possess the Spirit of Freemasonry remains a Lodge in the purest sense. The Lodge with the spirit is lost.

Once Brother Johnson realized what it was that was lost, he began to see other things differently. He understood that he had been caught up in the maelstrom of Lodge politics. Like many of the other officers and Past Masters, he had begun to see his role as an officer as a personal achievement - not as service to his Lodge. Brother Johnson had begun to ignore the Spirit that keeps Masonry vibrant, dynamic, and alive. While he

looked outside himself for the fundamental problems causing the decline of his Lodge, he was allowing the Masonic Spirit within himself to die.

This was a very serious revelation for Brother Johnson. After his God and his family, Freemasonry was the most important force in his life. He couldn't continue along the path he was on.

For several weeks, Brother Johnson stayed away from Lodge. During that time, he searched his soul for the way back to the Freemasonry he had found in Germany. When the answer came, he knew in his heart it was the only way.

The Lodge Secretary opened the letter from his Senior Warden. He hadn't been at lodge for awhile. "I hope I don't have problems with this one when he becomes Master," the secretary said to himself as he turned on his desk lamp. *He began to read:*

"Worshipful Brother Smith:

After much deliberation, I find it necessary to resign from my office as Senior Warden.

"I do not take this action lightly. For several weeks I have struggled with an internal conflict between my desire to become Master of my Lodge and my desire to find a Lodge where the Spirit of Freemasonry is still alive. I am happy to say the latter won.

"I can no longer participate in an organization where the structure and form of the organization mean more to the collective membership than does the pursuit of personal growth. After all, isn't the journey down the path to personal growth the purpose of our ritual and of our Fraternity.

"The Lodge where I was Raised understood this. Although the Lodge was only 10 years old at the time of my Raising, the Spirit of Freemasonry was so strong it permeated every part of a small Guest house in Germany where we met. The purpose of the meetings did not center around who did this or that. Rather, it was more important to discuss the next charity function, or the welfare of those who could not be with us. Then there was the ritual.

"We didn't have fancy paraphernalia or a projector for the lecture, but what degree work we performed! Each brother knew his part word for word. As fun was an integral part of our stated meetings, so was solemnity an integral part of the degree work. It was not difficult to impress upon the minds of the Brethren taking part the importance of good ritual work. After all, they were sharing with a new Brother those truths that would allow him to join and share in the brotherhood they loved without reservation. I know that somewhere there must a Lodge where Freemasonry means more than a struggle for the existence of worn-out rules and traditions - rules and traditions that become more important than the Masonic Spirit around which they were constructed.

"I am not bitter; only sad. Sad that I was unable to share my vision of the art of creating the perfect ashlar with the members of the Lodge.

"I don't want you to there to be any misunderstanding. I am not perfect. Perfect men do not need a spiritual Freemasonry; a Masonry I will try to find again.

Fraternally,

Thomas Johnson, Freemason"

The Lodge Secretary sat back in his chair. "Now what do we do?" he thought. "Well, we'll temporarily fill the station and finish the year. The loss of one officer won't stop us

from going on as before." He tossed the letter onto his desk as stood to go to supper. He shook his head as he took one last look at Brother Johnson's letter, and turned out the light.

The Gift

As a young man Sarkis H. Nahigian fled Armenia to escape persecution and arrived in the United States in 1890. He worked hard and became a successful businessman in Chicago and a devoted Mason. In 1948 he presented a priceless Oriental rug, 46½ feet long and 29½ feet wide, to the George Washington Masonic Memorial in Alexandria, Virginia. In presenting the gift he said:

"I came to America believing in miracles. I say these words with gratitude, faith and pride. Gratitude -- to the generations of hard-working and God-fearing men and women who came to this new country to make a home for freedom. Faith, in that the democracy they built will never die. Pride, in that my chance has come to show my appreciation for being an American. And believe me when I say there is no finer title, no higher position than to be a citizen of the United States."

"Here we have freedom of thought, freedom of the press, and freedom of speech. One does not appreciate what these freedoms mean until one recalls what it was to be deprived of them. Now, again, in humble spirit, it gives me great pleasure to donate to our beloved George Washington Memorial Building, the largest Persian Royal Meshed carpet I have ever known. I donate this carpet in grateful appreciation of all the unlimited privileges and friendships and support I have enjoyed in this blessed United States of America, and not among the least of these is my privilege of being a Mason."

BROTHERLY LOVE

"Brotherly love?" commented the Old Past Master.

"Oh, yes, the lodge is full of it. It is curious the way it manifests itself, sometimes, but when you dig down deep enough into men's hearts, you find a lot of it.

"A lot of them never show it, then," said the Very New Mason.

"Oh, no, certainly not! Men don't go around demonstrating their affection like a lot of girls, you know," answered the Old Past Master. "But you don't have to see a demonstration to know the feeling is there. The trouble with so many young Masons is their misunderstanding of the term 'brotherly love,' though high heaven knows the words are sufficiently easy to understand.

"'Brotherly,' now, means 'like a brother.' I know a lot of brothers hate each other, but they don't act like brothers. There have been cowardly soldiers, and forsworn ministers, and corrupt judges, but when you say a man is 'like a soldier,' you mean 'brave and true'; when you say he is 'good as a minister' you mean one who 'truly does his honest best.' When you say 'upright as a judge' you mean 'as straight as the best of judges.' And when I say 'brotherly' means 'like a brother,' I mean like a brother who is acting, as a good brother likes to act.

"As for 'love' there are more definitions than there are words in my mouth (which are several). But in connection with the 'brotherly' the word means that true affection which first considers the good of the person loved.

"Masonry teaches brotherly love. Many of its scholars are a long way from 100 per cent perfect in their lessons. But a lot could get an 'E' on their report card if the Lodge gave out evidence of scholastic standing! "For instance, there was B'Jones. That is not his name, but it will serve. B'Jones undertook to do a piece of work for a hospital. It took him a year. At the end of the year his business was in shreds and tatters. He had one of those businesses that needs a man's personal attention. "His attention had gone to his hospital, which, by the way, was built and flourishes, to the everlasting credit of his city. It ought to be called the B'Jones hospital, but it isn't. "A lot of his brethren in his lodge got to know about B'Jones. They called a meeting, called it the B'Jones meeting, issued stock in the B'Jones association, bought the stock, started B'Jones off all over again, and let him pay them back as he could. All this, without B'Jones ever asking for help. Brotherly love, my son, in the best meaning of the word.

"There was poor old Smith. Smith, during his lifetime, came to the lodge every night. He wasn't very bright, was Smith. He couldn't learn the work and had no presence. Couldn't make a speech to save his life, so he never was called on at banquets. He never did anything audible, but he was always on committees and he always passed around refreshments and he attended every funeral, and he was always down ahead of the meeting to see if the room was clean, and if it wasn't, he'd sweep it out. "He gave the best he had in service. Well, Smith died. Men do, you know; and awful lot have, already. At the funeral, we found out Smith left an invalid wife and two half grown children and no assets. It's the lodge's business to take care of such, and we did it. But three men in the lodge with more money than ability to keep it to themselves, subscribed enough cash to put the boy through a good business school and the girl through a normal school, so they could earn their own living. Charity? Nonsense! The lodge attended to the 'relief.' The three attended to brotherly love. They just remembered what old Smith was and how he gave, and so they turned to and gave. Actually, Smith did most of the loving. The three just acted in reflex to Smith's loving heart that so cared for his brethren and his Lodge he was always engaged in brotherly work.

"Do you know Brown? Brown runs a garage. Also, Brown ran a temperature until the doctors took him off to the hospital to cut out his something-or -other. Well, the garage was about to cash in. Garages don't run themselves, and there wasn't any one we could hire to run it. So six brothers of this lodge spent two hours a day each at the place, looking after it. We didn't do a very good job, I'm afraid: Brown says we are the worst garage keepers in the world, but we saved the shop from being wrecked and looted, and Brown thinks Masonry means something. One reason we did it was because of brotherly love in spirit of the fact

that sitting around a cold garage selling gasoline is about the uneasiest apology for loafing I know! "I could talk all night about it. But what's the use? Those to whom 'brotherly love' is just words won't listen to what I say and those who know what they really mean don't need to hear it."

"Well, I am glad I heard it!" answered the Very New Mason.

"Then," went the Old Past Master, "get it firmly fixed in your mind, young man, more than one man has gone into a lodge and curled his lip when he learned that he was supposed to be a brotherly lover, and turned around and wept when he found that he was being loved like a brother by men he didn't know cared what became of him. "Masonry works miracles all the time, and the commonest of them and the one she works oftenest is teaching hard-hearted citizens to be soft-hearted Masons; teaching men the real meaning of the words 'brotherly' and 'love' until they, too, become teachers."

Carl Claudy –

A Living Mason

His name is John. He has wild hair, wears a T-shirt with holes in it, jeans and no shoes. This was literally his wardrobe for his entire four years of college. He was the top of his class. Kind of esoteric and very, very bright. He became a Mason recently while attending college. After moving to his new town, he finds that down the street from his new apartment is a well-dressed, very conservative Lodge. One day John decides to go there after work. He walks in with shoes, jeans, his work shirt, and long hair. The Lodge has already started and so John starts looking for a seat.

The Lodge is completely packed and he can't find a seat. By now the Brethren are really looking a bit uncomfortable, but no one says anything. John gets closer and closer to the East end, when he realizes there are no seats, he squats down right on the carpet. (Although perfectly acceptable behavior at a college fellowship, trust me, this had never happened in this Lodge before!) By now the Brethren are really uptight, and the tension in the air is thick. About this time, the Secretary realizes that from way at the back of the Lodge, a Past Master is slowly making his way toward John.

Now the Past Master is in his eighties, has silver-gray hair, and a three-piece suit. A good man, very elegant, very dignified, and very courtly. He walks with a cane and, as he starts walking toward this boy, everyone is saying to themselves that you can't blame him for what he's going to do. How can you expect a man of his age and of his background to understand some college kid in the Lodge? It takes a long time for the man to reach the boy.

The Lodge is utterly silent except for the clicking of the man's cane. All eyes are focused on him. You can't even hear anyone breathing. The Secretary can't even continue with the "Minutes" until the Past Master does what he has to do. And now the Lodge watches as

this elderly man drops his cane on the floor. With great difficulty, he lowers himself and sits down next to John and welcomes him so he won't be alone.

When the Secretary gains control, he says, "What I'm about to say, you will never remember. What you have just seen, you will never forget."

"Be careful how you live. You may be the only Mason some people will ever meet."

Author unknown- sent to Cinosam by MWB Rod Larson

AN INCIDENT.

THE MASONIC REVIEW - 1858

Bro. W., living a few miles from this place, went on a visit to his friends in New York. On his return home, a nephew of his, who had just been admitted to practice at the bar, accompanied him. In the cars, in a seat in front of and facing theirs, was a woman with one or two children. Bro. W. was not long in opening conversation with her, in the course of which she said she would be obliged to stop at the next town, as her funds had become exhausted, so that she could not reach her home; but there she thought she could find Masons, who would help her - that her husband was the Master of a Lodge in Wisconsin, etc.

Bro. W., after satisfying himself that her story was a true one, asked her what amount she required. She replied that \$25 would be about it. The amount was handed to her by the brother, who was only glad that he could aid and assist her. His nephew, whose pride was greater than his gallantry, now broke out with:

"Uncle, if you have to dispense charity to every woman you meet, without knowing ought of her, I am ashamed of your kindness."

"Young man," said Bro. W., "I am older than you are, and have seen more of this world than you; and, mark it, we will sometimes make use of expressions in our youth, that we will repent of when we become older."

In due time they parted - each to their respective homes; the woman first thanking the brother for the favor, and promising that the amount should be sent him immediately on her reaching home. In two or three weeks, brother W. received a letter inclosing twenty-seven dollars, and on reading it, found it to be from that woman's husband, whose thanks, couched in the most beautiful language, were earnest. The letter was handed to the nephew to read, but before he was done, his heart was touched, and tears were seen to trickle down his cheeks, as he said:

"Uncle, do you remember what you said to me when I spoke so disrespectfully in the presence of that woman?"

"No, not particularly. What was it?" was the reply.

"You said that in our youth we would make use of expressions-"

"Yes, yes, I remember," was the reply.

" Well, I know the truth of that remark; and if I can be forgiven for that offense, I shall endeavor to do better in future."

Bro. W. is an old Mason, having been made a Mason before the "Morgan excitement;" yet I venture to say that he never felt prouder of having promised to aid and assist than then.

Fraternally Yours,

A MASON.

OTTAWA, ILL., FEB. 23, 1857.

Will It Be Too Late For You?

Being raised to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason is a great experience for any Mason. A Brother, just Raised, in his reply to the Toast told this story.

"There is one person whom I must particularly thank - my father. He joined the Masonic Lodge in Kelowna in 1977. I was 21 years old at the time and never heard of the Masons. A year later we moved to Calgary and, within a short time, Dad was raised to a Master Mason. I still knew nothing of the Masons. A couple of years later, Dad joined the Shrine. This time I saw something because it is hard to hide a fez and a marching patrol uniform! But I still knew nothing of the Shrine or the Masons.

My father died in 1993 and I still knew nothing about the Masons, but the next morning my step-mother came downstairs to me with a watch and a Masonic ring. She told me that the ring had belonged to both my grandfather and my dad and now it was mine. I still knew nothing about the Masons.

The funeral was a few days later and the Shrine Marching Patrol Honor Guard was there. Standing at the top of the church aisle, I found I was looking down to where my father's casket lay between two rows of both familiar and unfamiliar faces. These were the Honor Guard formed in two ranks to pay their respect - it was then, when I knew what Masonry was about. It was about friendship, comradeship, fellowship and loyalty. The common bond of these things joined all these men and, at that moment, I knew I wanted to be a part of it.

So the one person I want to thank most is not here to hear me say, "Thank you Dad - thank you for giving me the opportunity."

After the Festive Board was over, the NRB said that one of the Brethren came to him and told him that he had a son and after hearing the story, thinks he should talk to him about Masonry. He said it was hard to do, because he came from the 'old school' where nothing was said.

The Newly Raised Brother walked away smiling because one part of his comments, that he had been unable to make because of his emotions, had already borne fruit. He had written in his notes, "It's too late for my father and I to share this night together but maybe, just maybe, it won't be too late for YOU."

Do yourself, your loved ones and Masonry a favor - ensure your Will is current.

April, 1995, Grand Lodge of Alberta (Canada) Bulletin

MASTER'S WAGES

By Dave Camp

Our youngest son, Walter, was born early on Tuesday, April 16, 2002. After the c-section, my wife, Cathy, was settling in for the three-day hospital stay. On Wednesday, April 17, my Blue Lodge, Wayzata 205, was engaged in the work of raising two new brothers to the sublime degree of a Master Mason. During the early evening hours, Walter began to have trouble breathing. Our doctors quickly discovered he had holes in his lungs, and Cathy made the difficult decision to send her one-day old son to Children's Hospital in Minneapolis because of their Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.

Because of the degree work, she was unable to reach me until nearly 10:00 pm that evening. I traveled to the hospital immediately, so Cathy and I could discuss our son's situation with his NICU Doctor. When I arrived at the hospital it was nearly 11:00 pm. We telephoned Walter's Neonatologist, and I told her that I had just learned of Walter's condition. Surprised, she asked why it had taken nearly 5 hours for my wife to contact me. I informed her about the Lodge meeting and that I was a Freemason.

After a pause, she asked if I was a Shriner. I informed her that I was a member of the Zuhrah Shrine here in the Twin Cities. What she said next, I will never forget. "Mr. Camp, I would consider it an honor to treat your son. My daughter is currently receiving care at the Shriner's Hospital here in the Twin Cities." She then told me of her great respect for the Masonic Fraternity

and the charitable work we do at the Shriner's Hospitals. She finished our conversation by telling me that Walter's condition was serious, but not life threatening; and that Cathy and I could rest assured that she would personally watch over him throughout the remainder of her shift that night.

I have been told, by Brothers wiser than I am, that men who join our Masonic Fraternity in hopes of finding wealth, power and privilege will be sorely disappointed. On April 17, I received my Wages through a stranger's kind words and her generous treatment of my infant son. I now fully understand how correct my Brothers were, because the Wages I received that night are worth more to me than any amount of wealth this world can offer.

Mother and child are now home and doing just fine.....Neil

A young man passed a pawnbroker's shop. The moneylender was standing in front of his shop, and the young man noted that he was wearing a large and beautiful Masonic emblem. After going on a whole block, apparently lost in thought, the young man turned back, stepped up to the pawnbroker, and addressed him: "I see you're wearing a Masonic emblem. I'm a Freemason too. It happens that I'm desperately in need of \$25.00 just now. I shall be able to repay it within ten days. You don't know me; but I wonder whether the fact that you are a Freemason and that I am a Freemason is sufficient to induce you to lend me the money on my personal note."

The pawnbroker mentally appraised the young man, who was clean-cut, neat and well-dressed. After a moment's thought, he agreed to make the loan on the strength of the young man's being a Freemason. The two went into the pawnshop, where the young man signed a note and received the \$25.00, then went his way. Within a few days the young man repaid the loan as agreed, and that ended the transaction.

About four months later the young man was in a Lodge receiving the Entered Apprentice degree; he had not really been a Mason when he borrowed \$25.00 from the pawnbroker. After he had been admitted for the second section of the degree and placed where all candidates are placed, the young man looked across the Lodge room and noted sitting there the pawnbroker from whom he had borrowed \$25.00 several months before, on the strength of his being a Freemason. His face turned crimson and he became nervous and jittery. He recollected the admonition he had just received from the Master, and he was bothered. He wondered whether the pawnbroker had recognized him. Apparently

not, so he planned, at the first opportunity, to leave the Lodge room and avoid his benefactor.

The lecture and charge probably were lost on him. As soon as the Lodge was closed, he moved quickly for the door of the Tyler's room, but the pawnbroker had recognized the young man, headed him off west of the altar and, to the young man's astonishment, approached him and greeted him with a smile and outstretched hand.

"Well, I see you weren't a Freemason after all when you borrowed that \$25.00," the pawnbroker commented.

The blood rushed to the young man's face as he stammered, "No, I wasn't, but I wish you'd let me explain. I had always heard that Freemasons were charitable and ready to aid a Brother in distress. When I passed your shop that day, I didn't need that \$25.00. I had plenty of money in my wallet, but when I saw the Masonic emblem you were wearing, I decided to find out whether the things I'd heard about Freemasonry were true. You let me have the money on the strength of my being a Freemason, so I concluded that what I had heard about the Masons was true, that they are charitable, that they do aid Brethren in distress. That made such a deep impression on me that I presented my petition to this Lodge and here I am. I trust that, with this explanation, you will forgive me for having lied to you."

The pawnbroker responded, "Don't let that worry you too much. I wasn't a Freemason when I let you have the money. I had no business wearing the Masonic emblem you saw. Another man had just borrowed some money on it, and it was so pretty that I put it on my lapel for a few minutes. I took it off the moment you left. I didn't want anyone else borrowing money on the strength of my being a Freemason. When you asked for that \$25.00, I remembered what I had heard about the Masons, that they were honest, upright, and cared for their obligations promptly. It seemed to me, that \$25.00 wouldn't be too much to lose to learn if what I'd heard about Freemasons was really true, so I lent you the money and you repaid it exactly as you said you would. That convinced me that what I'd heard about the Masons was true, so I presented my petition to this Lodge. I was the candidate just ahead of you."

'Old Tiler Talks,' by Carl Claudy

"If I had it my way," began the New Brother, sitting beside the Old Tiler, "I'd make it a Masonic offense to laugh in the lodge room. We are not as serious about our Masonry as we should be."

"Someone laughed at you, or you are talking to yourself very seriously!" answered the Old Tiler.

"I am not!" cried the New Brother. "I take Masonry seriously! What we do in the lodge room has the sacredness of a religious ceremony. I can see no difference between the sacredness of the Altar of Masonry and the altar of a church, and when

I go and see the beautiful windows, and hear the music and watch the choir boys come up the aisle, and hear the minister give out the solemn text- well, you know how inspiring it is. I feel the same way in lodge sometimes, during the more solemn parts of the degrees. But we have a business meeting first and sometimes someone cracks a joke and everyone laughs, and some brethren misinterpret and giggle sometimes in the degrees, and there is some ritual which isn't awe-inspiring and- and I think it should be changed!"

"Well, go ahead and change it!" cried the Old Tiler. "I don't believe that absence of solemnity is a Masonic landmark which can't be changed."

"Of course it isn't, but how can I change it?"

"That's your problem!" smiled the Old Tiler. "You are the reformer, not I. But before I wasted much grey matter, I'd ask myself a few questions. You seem to like things serious, so this should come easy to you. Then I'd talk to the Chaplain. David is young, but he has common sense.

"It would do you good to go his church. You would find it as solemn and beautiful as any other during the service. But if you went to a vestry meeting you'd see David grin, and maybe someone would tell a ministerial joke. I can't imagine God being displeased about it. Seems to me if he hadn't wanted people to laugh he wouldn't have made so many brethren to laugh at!

"Brother David would tell you that there was a time to be reverent and a time to be happy, and that a church in which people couldn't be happy wasn't much of a church. Ever go to a wedding? Ever see people grin and kiss the bride when it was over? Ever go to a church social? Ever go to the boys' club in a red-blooded church?"

"It didn't hurt the church in their eyes, did it? Then why should it disconcert you to have a lodge room treated the same way? Get it out of your head that Masonry or religion is bound up in a room, or a building. It doesn't hurt so long as we don't laugh at the wrong time! It doesn't hurt the solemnity of the Masonic degree that our lodge room is first but a business meeting hall and afterwards maybe a dining room. It is the spirit in which we do our work that counts, not the letter; it is the temple in our hearts which must be kept sacred, not the mere physical confines of brick and stone in which we meet.

"That there should be no cause for laughter during the degrees. But to say we can't laugh in a lodge room is to get the dog by the wrong tail!

"Masonry, my son, is joyful, not mournful. It should be filled with laughter of little children, the happy smiles of contented women, the loveliness of faithful friendship, the joy of flowers and music and song. To make it too serious for smiles, too solemn for happiness, perverts it. If God made sunshine and children and flowers, don't you suppose He wanted the one to dance with the other in the third? If He made happiness and human hearts, don't you suppose He wanted the one to live in the other?"

"Masonry is an attempt to live the brotherhood of man under the Fatherhood of God. The best of all human fathers can but touch the skirts of the Being who is the All Father. But did you ever see a human father worth his salt who didn't want his children laughing and happy?"

"There is a time for work and a time for play. There is a time for degrees and a time for refreshment. There is a time for business meetings and a time for ritual. There is

a time for laughter and for joy as well as a time of solemnity and reverence. The one is just as important as the other."

"I wish just once," said the New Brother, "I could start something with you which I could finish!"

"Try offering me a cigar!" suggested the Old Tiler.

Old Tiler Talks" by Carl Claudy -1924

POOR FISH

"If I didn't love the old lodge so much I'd dimit and go to a live one!" The New Brother spoke disgustedly to the Old Tiler. He laid down his sword, hitched in his chair and snorted. "S'matter with the old lodge now?" he asked belligerently.

"Oh, the same old thing. Same old gang. No possible chance of doing anything different than we ever did. No pep. No costumes. No new expenditure for anything. We have died on the vine and don't know it!"

"Someone step on a resolution you offered?"

"Didn't offer any. Knew better. No use asking that bunch to do anything."

"Listen, brother, while I give you some advice. Look at an aquarium and consider the fishes."

"Huh?"

"Consider the fishes- the poor fishes. I asked the master of the aquarium what kept a bass in a glass pot full of water from eating up his small minnow companions. He told me he had trained the bass not to eat the minnows. I asked him how he could do that. He said he put a plate glass partition in the aquarium, with the minnows on one side and the bass on the other. The bass made a nose dive after a mouthful of minnows and got a noseful of invisible plate glass. That made him pause for a moment but he soon returned. For three days that determined bass tried to dive through the glass he couldn't see. After the third day his nose was so sore he gave up. Decided, probably, that the minnows were ghost minnows and couldn't be eaten! He has lived with them a year since and never tried to eat one, even when it rubs against his nose.

"Now, brother, you consider the poor fish. He doesn't try anything because once he did and got a sore nose. You think the old lodge is dead because it won't spend money for costumes or stage an entertainment or buy a new temple or something. You are convinced it has withered on the vine, because it hasn't done anything progressive. Every brother in it talks the same way. Everyone wants to do something, but a few years ago a crowd of standpatters put a plate glass between the membership and any minnows of progress. The plate glass is long gone and the standpatters are a ring no more. But you and all the rest are afraid to offer constructive programs because you think the plate glass is still there. Between you and the bass, there's little difference in wealth."

"Wealth? I don't get you!"

"I said wealth. You are the poor fish."

"That's handing it out pretty straight," commented the New Brother. "Now, tell me, Old Tiler, why you think this old lodge doesn't spend money for anything except necessities and charity? You think it is a good lodge, a flourishing lodge, an old lodge!"

"Got any loose change in your pocket?" asked the Old Tiler.

"Sure, a handful," said the New Brother, pulling it out.

"Hold a dime in front of one eye and close the other. What do you see?" commanded the Old Tiler.

"Why, I see a dime, of course!" was the surprised answer.

"Exactly. You see a dime. You don't see the \$1.87 on the chair. A dime is close so that you can't see the \$1 a foot away. That's the idea of brethren who won't spend lodge money for anything they don't have to. They see the treasury full to bursting and investments piling up, then they try to look through a dime and are so scared to spend a dollar they don't dare read the treasurer's report aloud for fear someone will steal it!"

"It was a fine lodge, now it is running on its reputation. It used to spend money wisely. Everything we needed we had. We had jamborees and smokers and entertainments; we had picnics and outings; we had educational lectures and a library; instructive talks were given new brethren and candidates. We spent what we took in and made better Masons by so doing. Gradually we began to look at the thin dimes so hard we couldn't see the success, progress, reputation, we had bought with dollars. So we stopped spending. Now we have money and a reputation of having died on the vine. What shall it profit a lodge if it lay up large numbers of dollars in the treasury, and lose its hold on its members? Where is the profit of penuriousness and lack of progress, even if we have money? What good is money unless you spend it? A million dollars at the North Pole isn't as valuable as one fur coat. All the money in the world on a desert island wouldn't but one newspaper. You must spend money to get the good of it. You must spend money to make money. And you must spend money to keep your lodge alive and make your members better members and your Masons happy Masons."

"I never thought of it that way," hesitated the New Brother.

"I think I'll start a public aquarium," continued the Old tiler.

"For what?" the New Brother was unwise enough to ask.

"For the poor fish, of course," snapped the Old Tiler. "I've got one here to start with."

"Come on in the lodge room with me," commanded the New Brother firmly. "No Old Tiler can call me a poor fish and get away with it!"

"What are you going to do?" asked the Old Tiler.

"Offer a resolution to spend \$1,000 in the next six months in educational work among our members, and you are going to second it."

"There goes the start of a perfectly good aquarium," sighed the Old Tiler.

Masonry's Failure

"Old Tiler Talks," by Carl Claudy

"Why does Masonry fail so much?" puzzled the New Brother, dropping into a chair beside the Old Tiler in the anteroom.

"I didn't know it did," commented the Old Tiler. "But then, I'm an old man and my eyes are not very good. Maybe I don't see clearly any more. Tell me about it."

"Oh, you see well enough! You just don't want to admit that the order to the service of which you have devoted so much time and thought is just a failure!"

"Is that so!" The Old Tiler seemed surprised. "You interest me! But pity my foibles and tell me your side of it!"

"Masonry fails because it doesn't interest men sufficiently to make them practice what they preach. I was at Jones' house tonight. Went to bring him to lodge in the car. After we had left he said: 'Of course you know I'm not really going to lodge! Got a hen on! Nice fat lil' poker game. Want to sit in?' I told him I didn't. But I took him to his 'nice fat lil' game!' Now, there is a man who tells his family he is going to lodge, and then plays poker. I say Masonry has failed with him. It hasn't even taught him to tell the truth!"

"Remember Roberts? He was arrested last week for forgery. He has been a member for several years. Yet Masonry couldn't teach him to be honest. There was Williamson, who tried to kill his doctor; and Burton who has been defending an ugly divorce suit...they are lodge members, but Masonry didn't teach them to be what they ought to be. And say...did you hear about Larson? Well..." the New Brother lowered his voice. "It's being whispered about that..." He leaned over to talk in the Old Tiler's ear. "Now, that isn't Masonry...it's a violation of all his obligations. So I say Masonry has failed with him. What do you say?"

"Yes, Masonry failed to make an impression on these men to suit you, even as Masonry has failed to make an impression on you to suit me!" snapped the Old Tiler. "That last remark you made was an unadulterated scandal! Does Masonry teach you to talk scandal? But never mind that! Let me dig a few weeds out of the scrubby, ill-tended, and unwatered garden you miscall your mind and see if we can't get it ready to grow one straight thought!"

"I know Jones. He is a member of the city club, the country club, Dr. Parkin's church, and a luncheon club. Neither church nor luncheon club teach deception or foster lies. Both instruct in morality, one by precept, the other by practice. By what right do you blame Masonry for Jones' failure to tell the truth, any more than the church or the luncheon club? Is Jones' mother to blame because she didn't teach her boy never to tell a lie? How about his Sunday School teacher and his wife? Are they to blame? If not, why is Masonry to blame?"

"Roberts has been accused of forgery. I don't know whether he is guilty or not. Williamson seems to have had some real justification for feeling enmity toward his doctor, although nothing justifies murder, of course. Burton may be a sinner or sinned against...I don't know. As for Larson, it will take more than your whispers of scandal to make me believe ill of a brother until I know something.

"But let us suppose Roberts a forger, Williamson a murderer, Burton a Don Juan. All these men grew up, went to school, got out in the world, joined clubs, societies, orders, became Masons, members of a church...Why pick on Masonry as the failure when these men go wrong? Is it just? If the church of God can't keep a man straight how can

Masonry be expected to?

"It is rankly unjust to blame Christ for the failures of those who profess to follow Him. Was it Christ's fault that Peter denied Him and Judas betrayed Him? Was it the fault of the religion they professed? Or was it the fault of the man, the character, the up-bringing, the times?

"Men fail, and fall, and rise and try again...or fall and stay in the mud. To those who rise Masonry has a helping hand to extend. To those who fail and stay fallen, she has charity. Not hers the fault that humanity is frail. She holds the torch; if they close their eyes to its radiance and refuse to see the narrow path that the torch illumines, will you blame the torch?

"Masonry does not fail men. Men fail Masonry. Masonry has the teachings, the thought, the ennobling influence, the example to set, the vision to show those who have eyes to see. If they close their hearts to the ennobling influence, will not profit by the example and shut their eyes to the vision, is that the fault of Masonry?

"You, my brother, have just talked scandal without proof; a whispered slander against the good name of a Mason. Has Masonry failed with you that it has not taught you tolerance, brotherly love, reticence, charity of thought? Or is the failure in you as it may be within these men you mention?"

"The Old Tiler waited. The New Brother hung his head. At last he spoke.

"I am most properly rebuked. How shall I make amends?"

"A great teacher said to you and all like you and to me and all like me; 'Go, and sin no more!'" answered the Old Tiler reverently.

SHE CHANGED HER MIND - A TRUE STORY by CARL H. CLAUDY- 1937

Timmy O'Rourke is as Irish as his name, and one of the hardest working Lodge Secretaries I know. I like Timmy for many reasons, maybe you'll guess why before you have finished this page. "It was back a few years," Timmy confided to me after Lodge was closed one night. "Oh, I don't know--the girls are fifteen and seventeen--fourteen, fifteen years ago."

"What girls?"

"Our girls--Tuscan Lodge's girls. Stop interrupting!" growled Timmy.

"'Tis a good story you'll be spoiling . . ."

I promised to say not another word.

"Tuscan had a Brother Cohen--and he was as fine a chap as you'd want to meet. Cohen had two babies--one two, the other four--beautiful girl babies. Mrs. Cohen died, and Cohen took his bairns and went to board with Mrs. Halloran. Mrs. Halloran is just the way all Mrs. Hallorans who keep boarding houses ought to be; she's fat and sixty-nine now, and Irish and Catholic, and with a brogue as big as her heart. And, of course, she took the motherless babies to her heart and loved them in the ample Irish way. This was in a city some five hundred miles from Tuscan Lodge.

Then Brother Cohen got himself killed in an auto accident, and there was no kith nor kin to look after body or babies. A Lodge in the city where he died wired us for instructions; what were they to do with the

body of our Brother, and with his bairns? Tuscan wired back to bury Brother Cohen and send us the bill, and ship on the babies--we'd adopt them and put them in the Home.

"The Lodge buried Brother Cohen, but the Welfare Board or the Court, some one, wouldn't let them send us the babies. It seems orphans just can't be shipped around like dead bodies. Well, we wanted the babies.

Cohen was ours and we loved him, and his babies, by the beard of Solomon (did Solomon have a beard?) were ours, too. So we wrote to the Court.

"But Mrs. Halloran wanted the babies, too. She had grown to love them, and she resented with all her huge Irish heart the idea of any group of men in general, and Masons in particular, robbing her as she thought of it, of 'her' children. She got her a lawyer and we got us a lawyer, and at the right time the Lodge sent me on to the city where the Court was to decide.

"Mrs. Halloran's lawyer put her on the stand, and she did a great job of damning the Masons and loving the kiddies; she had witnesses to prove she had means enough to take care of them, and she didn't need any witnesses to make every one sure she loved the little girls--and her lawyer hadn't overlooked the bet of having them present, all dressed up in their best bibs and tuckers. Mrs. Halloran was a star at dramatic loving of the children, and when she got through every one seemed satisfied they were hers.

"Well, I liked the old lady. But I had a job to do, too, so I told the court how the Lodge had loved Cohen, and of how we had a beautiful Masonic Home--I had photographs to show him--and of how we, the Lodge, had an income sufficient to take care of a hundred orphans. And I stressed that we didn't want the babies for any ulterior motive, but just because they were our Brother's children. And I guess I laid it on pretty thick about the educational advantages of the Home . . .

"The Court didn't take long to decide. 'Any group of men who want those children badly enough to undertake to bring them up, and who would send a representative on a journey of five hundred miles for no other reason than brotherly love, deserve consideration,' the Court said. 'Mrs. Halloran cannot offer the children so many advantages, and it is obvious the children should be brought up in the father's religion. So

the Court awards these minors to Tuscan."

"Mrs. Halloran broke into a storm of weeping, and the babies cried, and a lot of women in the Court sniffled, and it was a very damp party, indeed. The judge called me to the Bench and said 'You have what you came after. But if I were you I'd be a little tactful with Mrs. Halloran. You can see she loves the children. . .'

"I went over and sat down by Mrs. Halloran. She was trying to say good-bye to the babies and making very wet work of it.

" 'You think I am a bad man,' I began, 'but. . .

" 'Bad, is ut!' she stormed at me. "Faith, an' if I thot ye was bad, I'd have th' loife of yez. Staling my babies. . .I think ye fought fr a principle but I hate yez. Now I can part with 'em. . ." She wept afresh. "The poor childer. . ."

" 'But I'm not asking you to say good-bye to them, now,'" I interrupted.

"She looked at me, puzzled.

" 'You take them home and get them ready. Pack up their things. Then, after a week or so, I want you to bring them to the Masonic Home. We'll pay your expenses both ways. Come with them. See for yourself what a lovely place it is. Meet the House Mother--you'll know when you see her she will love and take care of the children. And if you are not entirely satisfied--well, you can bring them back with you again.'

"Maybe that was stretching it a little, but the old lady was in real distress.

" 'Ye mane I can bring 'em mesilf! Ye mane I can make shure th childer will be well trated?'

" 'Exactly so,' I said, and Mrs. Halloran gathered up her bag, her umbrella, a parcel, and her two babies and swept her two hundred and fifty pounds from the Court.

"In due time Mrs. Halloran came to the Home. I met her. She came with a chip on her shoulder and, metaphorically, a chain around the neck of each baby. But we have a swell Home, and after she had been there two days, and seen the School, and the other children, and talked with the Superintendent and his staff, and with the guests . . .well, she changed her mind. She backed me into a corner.

" 'Tis a fine job ye did, young man!' she accused me. "Fine, indade, winnin' me over whin I wasn't to be won. But I c'n see ye can do more f'r thim here than I can, an'--" "Heaven gave me the wit to know what she was trying to say and couldn't get past the lump.

" 'Indeed, yes, Mrs. Halloran! You can come as often as you want, and in summer they can come to you for a vacation--we want them to have you and your love . . ."

"And then I was hugged in public--smothered is more nearly the term, and I loved it! And now once a year Mrs. Halloran comes to see her girls, and once a year they spend two weeks with her. And if you could hear her talk about the Masons! 'Sure, th' good father says ye are forbid by th' church,' she says, 'but I knows what I know. 'Tis good men ye are an I'll fight wid enywan who says ye ain't. 'Tis all goin' th' same road--"

I thought this over for a moment. Then: "How does Mrs. Halloran get enough money to make the journey every year? Does the Lodge . . ."

"It does not," said Timmy, rather shortly, "and 'tis none of your business."

He was right. It wasn't. But I think I know. Which is one of many reasons why I like Timmy.....

THE DAY THE WAR STOPPED

Up the steep hill they trudged, sweating in the sticky June heat, staggering under the weight of the coffin, the white flag of truce flying before them in the hot summer sun. The guns of their federal gunboat, the USS Albatross, anchored in the Mississippi off Bayou Sara, fell silent behind them as the ship's surgeon and two officers struggled toward St. Francisville atop the hill.

The procession was not an impressive one, certainly not an unusual event in the midst of a bloody war, and it would no doubt have escaped all notice

but for one fact... this was the day the war stopped, if only for a few mournful moments.

Lt. Commander John E. Hart, the federal commander of the Albatross, was a valiant naval officer whose skill and bravery were renowned. Commander Hart would have even more lasting impact through his death, which occurred as the Albatross lay at anchor near Bayou Sara, having shelled both that low-lying port settlement and the city of St. Francisville atop the bluffs.

Masonic and U.S. Naval records list Hart as having "suicide," died by his own hand "in a fit of delirium". Perhaps he suffered from dementia induced by yellow fever, for a mere four days earlier he had certainly exhibited no depression or despair in a letter home.

Hart was a Mason, and aboard his ship were other officers also "members of the Craft," desirous of burying their commander ashore rather than consigning the remains to the river waters. A boat was sent from the Albatross under a flag of truce to ascertain if there were any Masons in the town of St. Francisville.

Now it just so happened that the two brothers named White were living near the river and they were Masons. They informed the little delegation that there was indeed a Masonic lodge in the town, in fact one of the oldest in the state, Feliciana Lodge No. 31. Its Master was absent, serving in the Confederate Army and its Senior Warden, W.W. Leake, was likewise engaged. But, according to Masonic correspondence, "Brother Leake's headquarters were in the saddle," he was reported to be in the vicinity, and he was soon found and persuaded to honor the request. As a soldier, Leake reportedly said "He considered it his duty: to permit burial of a deceased member of the armed forces of any government, even one presently at war with his own, and as a Mason, he knew it to be his duty to accord Masonic burial to the remains of a brother Mason without taking into account the nature of their relations in the outer world."

The surgeon and officers of the USS Albatross, struggling up from the river with Hart's body, were met by W.W. Leake, the White brothers and other members of the Masonic lodge. In the procession was also a squad of Marines at trail arms. They were met at Grace Episcopal Church by the Reverend Mr. Lewis, Rector, and with full Episcopal and Masonic services, Commander John E. Hart was laid to rest in the Masonic burial lot in Grace's peaceful cemetery, respect being paid by Union and Confederate soldiers alike. And soon the war resumed.

But for one brief touching moment, the war had stopped at St Francisville.

(Source: Re-enactment Brochure, St. Francisville, LA)

Book on the Altar

The Old Tiler Talks By Carl H. Claudy

"I heard the most curious tale," began the New Brother, seating himself beside the Old Tiler during refreshment.

"Shoot!" commanded the Old Tiler.

"Friend of mine belongs to a Midwest lodge. Seems they elected a chap to become a member but when he took the degree he stopped the work to ask for the Koran in place of the Bible on the Altar. Said he wanted the holy book of his faith, and the Bible wasn't it!"

"Yes, go on," prompted the Old Tiler, "What did they do?"

"The officers held a pow-wow and the Master finally decided that as the ritual demanded the 'Holy Bible, Square and Compasses' as furniture for the lodge, the applicant was wrong and that he'd have to use the Bible or not take his degree. And the funny part was that the initiate was satisfied and took his degree with the Bible on the altar. I'm glad they have him, and not this lodge."

"Why?" asked the Old Tiler.

"Why, a chap who backs down that way can't have very much courage; I'd have had more respect for him if he'd insisted and if he couldn't have his way, refused to go on with the degree."

"All wrong, brother, all wrong!" commented the Old Tiler. "The Mohammedan initiate wasn't concerned about himself but about the lodge. He sowed a high degree of Masonic principle in asking for his own holy book, and a great consideration for the lodge. This man isn't a Christian. He doesn't believe in Christ. He believes in Allah and Mohammed his prophet. The Bible, to you a holy book, is to him no more than the Koran is to you. You wouldn't regard an obligation taken on a dictionary or a cook book or a Koran as binding, in the same degree that you would one taken on the Bible.

"That's the way this chap felt. He wanted to take his obligation so that it would bind his conscience. The Master would not let him, because he slavishly followed the words of the ritual instead of the spirit of Masonry.

"Masonry does not limit an applicant to his choice of a name for a Supreme Being. I can believe in Allah, or Buddha, or Confucius, or Mithra, or Christ, or Siva, or Brahma, or Jehovah, and be a good Mason. If I believe in a Great Architect that is all Masonry demands; my brethren do not care what I name Him."

"Then think you this chap isn't really obligated? I must write my friend and warn him -"

"Softly, softly! Any man with enough reverence for Masonry, in advance of knowledge of it, to want his own holy book on which to take an obligation would feel himself morally obligated to keep his word, whether there was his, another's or no holy book at all, on the Altar. An oath is not really binding because of the book beneath your hand. It is the spirit with which you assume an obligation which makes it binding. The book is but a symbol that you make your promise in the presence of the God you revere. The cement of brotherly love which we spread is not material-the working tools of a Master Mason are not used upon stone but upon human hearts. Your brother did his best to conform to

the spirit of our usages in asking for the book he had been taught to revere. Failing in that through no fault of his own, doubtless he took his obligation he took his obligation with a sincere belief in its sacredness. Legally he would not be considered to commit perjury if he asked for his own book and was forced to use another.

"What's the law got to do with it?"

"Just nothing at all, which is the point I make. In England and America, Canada and South America, Australia, and part of the Continent, the Bible is universally used. In Scottish Rite bodies you will find many holy books; but let me ask you this; when our ancient brethren met on hills and in valleys, long before Christ, did they use the New Testament on their Altars? Of course not; there was none. You can say that they used the Old Testament and I can say they used a Talmud and someone else can say they used none at all, and all of us are as right as the other. But they used a reverence for sacred things.

"If you write your friend, you might tell him that the ritual which permits a man to name his God as he pleases, but demands that a book which reveres one particular God be used, is faulty. The ritual of Masonry is faulty, it was made by man. But the spirit of Masonry is divine; it comes from men's hearts. If obligations and books and names of the Deity are matters of the spirit; every condition is satisfied. If I were Master and an applicant demanded any one of any six books on which to lay his hand while he pledged himself to us, I'd get them if they were to be had, and I'd tell my lodge what is reverent Masonic spirit was in the man who asked."

"Seems to me you believe in a lot of funny things; how many gods do you believe in, Old Tiler?"

"There is but one," was the Old Tiler's answer, "Call Him what you will. Let me repeat a little bit of a verse for you:

*'At the Meuzzin's call for prayer
The kneeling faithful thronged the square;
Amid a monastery's weeds,
An old Franciscan told his beads,
While on Pushkara's lofty height
A dark priest chanted Brahma's might,
While to the synagogue there came
A Jew, to praise Jehovah's Name,
The One Great God looked down and smiled
And counted each His loving child,
For Turk and Brahmin, monk and Jew
Had reached him through the gods they knew.*

"If we reach Him in Masonry, it makes little difference by what sacred name we arrive," finished the Old Tiler, reverently.

"You've reached me, anyhow," said the New Brother, shaking hands as if he meant it

The Old Tiler first appeared in print in August, 1921, when the first of 414 "Old Tiler Talks" were printed in the Fellowship Forum, a fraternal newspaper published in Washington, D.C. In 1925 the publisher asked the author to select a few of the best of the talks and 39 were accordingly made into a little volume, copyrighted in that year. The book, which sold for a dollar, ran into two editions of 5,000 copies each.

It was a tale of Masonic men surrounding a campfire in the Old West, at night, discussing the Fraternity and its teachings. One old man listened patiently, and finally spoke up:
"I can tell you more about Masonry in a little example than some of the great Masonic philosophers can in books. Everybody stand up, and gather in a circle around the campfire."
They did that.
"Now, everybody hold hands with the man next to him."
They did that, too.
"Now, what do you see, looking ahead?"
"The face of a Brother Mason through the flames."
"What do you feel in front of you?"
"The warmth of the fire, and the comfort it brings on a cool night."
"What do you feel at your side?"
"The warm hand of a Brother."
"OK. Now, drop the hands, and turn around."
They did so.
"Now, what do you see, looking ahead?"
"Complete darkness."
"What do you feel, looking ahead?"
"A sense of loneliness, of being alienated."
"What do you feel at your side?"
"Nothing at all."
"What do you feel on your backside?"
"The warmth of the fire."
"So it is with Masonry," said the old man. "In Masonic gatherings, you can feel the warmth of Masonic interaction, you can see the face of a Brother through the light Masonry brings to you, and you can always feel the warm hand of a Brother. When you turn away from Masonry, and are out in the world, you see darkness, feel alienated and alone, and do not feel the warm hand of your Masonic Brother. But Masonry, and the warmth and light it brings, are just a turn away from you."

Sent to Cinosam by Brother Milt Youmans

A story for those brethren who haven't attended Lodge in some time

A member of a certain Lodge, who previously attended meetings regularly, stopped going. After a few months, the Worshipful Master decided to visit him. It was a chilly evening, and the Worshipful Master found his brother at home alone, sitting before a blazing fire.

Guessing the reason for the Worshipful Master's visit, the brother welcomed him, led him to a comfortable chair near the fireplace and waited. The Worshipful Master made himself comfortable, but said nothing.

In the grave silence, he contemplated the dance of the flames around the burning logs. After several minutes, the Worshipful Master took the fire tongs, carefully picked up a brightly burning ember and placed it to one side of the hearth, all alone. Then he sat back in his chair, still silent.

His host watched all of this in quiet contemplation. As the one, lone ember's flame flickered and diminished, there was a momentary glow, and its fire was no more. Soon, it was cold and dead.

Not a word had been spoken since the initial greeting. The Worshipful Master glanced at his watch and chose this time to leave. He slowly stood up, picked up the cold, dead ember, and placed it back in the middle of the fire. Immediately, it began to glow once more, with all the light and warmth of the burning coals around it.

As the Worshipful Master reached the door to leave, his host said, with a tear running down his cheek, "Thank you so much for your fiery summons, my brother. I'll be back in our Lodge next meeting."

Are you a Master Mason?

"I have been a Mason for a year now," remarked the Young Brother to the Old Past Master.

"While I find a great deal in Masonry to enjoy and like the fellows and all that, I am more or less in the dark as to what good Masonry really is in the world. I don't mean I can't appreciate its charity or its fellowship, but it seems to me that I don't get much out of it. I can't really see why it has any function outside of the relationship we enjoy in the Lodge and the charitable acts we do."

"I think I could win an argument about you," smiled the Past Master.

"An argument about me?"

"Yes. You say you have been a Master Mason for a year. I think I could prove to the satisfaction of a jury of your peers, who would not need to be Master Masons, that while you are a Lodge member in good standing, you are not a Master Mason."

"I don't think I quite understand," puzzled the Young Mason. "I was quite surely initiated, passed, and raised. I have my certificate and my good standing card. I attend Lodge regularly. I do what work I am assigned. If that isn't being a Master Mason, what is?"

"You have the body but not the spirit," retorted the Old Past Master. "You eat the husks and disregard the kernel. You know the ritual and fail to understand its meaning. You carry the documents, but for you they attest but an empty form. You do not understand the first underlying principle, which makes Masonry the great force she is. And yet, in spite of it, you enjoy her blessings, which is one of her miracles. A man may love and profit by what he does not comprehend."

"I just don't understand you at all. I am sure I am a good Mason."

"No man is a good Mason who thinks the Fraternity has no function beyond pleasant association in the Lodge and charity. There are thousands of Masons who seldom see the inside of a Lodge

and, therefore, miss the fellowship. There are thousands who never need or support her charity and so never come in contact with one of its many features. Yet these may take freely and largely from the treasure house which is Masonry.

"Masonry, my young friend, is an opportunity. It gives a man a chance to do and to be, among the world of men, something he otherwise could not attain. No man kneels at the altar of Masonry and rises again the same man. At the altar something is taken from him never to return. His feelings of living for himself alone. Be he ever so selfish, ever so self-centered, ever so much an individualist, at the altar he leaves behind him some of the dross of his purely profane make-up.

"No man kneels at the altar of Masonry and rises the same man because, in the place where the dross and selfish were, is put a little of the most Divine spark which men may see. Where the self-interest was is put an interest in others. Where the egotism was is put love for one's fellow man. You say that the 'Fraternity has no function.' Man, the Fraternity performs the greatest function of any institution at work among men in that it provides a common meeting ground where all of us "be our creed, our social position, our wealth, our ideas, our station in life what they may" may meet and understand one another.

"What caused the Civil War? Failure of one people to understand another and an inequality of men which this country could not endure. What caused the Great War? Class hatred. What is the greatest leveler of class in the world? Masonry. Where is the only place in which a capitalist and laborer, socialist and democrat, fundamentalist and modernist, Jew and Gentile, sophisticated and simple alike meet and forget their differences? In a Masonic Lodge, through the influence of Masonry. "Masonry, which opens her portals to men because they are men, not because they are wealthy or wise or foolish or great or small but because they seek the brotherhood which only she can give.

"Masonry has no function? Why, son, the function of charity, great as it is, is the least of the things Masonry does. The fellowship in the Lodge, beautiful as it is, is at best not much more than one can get in any good club, association, or organization. These are the beauties of Masonry, but they are also beauties of other organizations. The great fundamental beauty of Masonry is all her own. She, and only she, stretches a kindly and loving hand around the world, uniting millions in a bond too strong for breaking. Time has demonstrated that Masonry is too strong for war, too strong for hate, too strong for jealousy and fear. The worst of men have used the strongest of means and have but pushed Masonry to one side for the moment; not all their efforts have broken her, or ever will!

"Masonry gives us all a chance to do and to be; to do a little, however humble the part, in making the world better; to be a little larger, a little fuller in our lives, a little nearer to the G.A.O.T.U. And unless a man understands this, believes it, takes it to his heart, and lives it in his daily life, and strives to show it forth to others in his every act unless he live and love and labor in his Masonry "I say he is no Master Mason; aye, though he belong to all Rites and carry all cards, though he be hung as a Christmas tree with jewels and pins, though he be an officer in all Bodies. But the man who has it in his heart and sees in Masonry the chance to be in reality what he has sworn he would be, a brother to his fellow Masons, is a Master Mason though he be raised but tonight, belongs to no body but his Blue Lodge, and be too poor to buy and wear a single pin."

The Young Brother, looking down, unfastened the emblem from his coat lapel and handed it to the Old Past Master. "Of course, you are right," he said, lowly. "Here is my pin. Don't give it back to me until you think I am worthy to wear it."

The Old Past Master smiled. "I think you would better put it back now," he answered gently. "None are fit to wear the Square and Compasses than those who know themselves unworthy, for they are those who strive to be real Masons.

Did you have a happy Christmas?" inquired the New Brother in the anteroom.

"Indeed, yes! Did you?"

"Not particularly. Same old day, same old expense, same old gifts, same old thing," yawned the New Brother. "What did you do that made it happy?"

"First thing I went to church," answered the Old Tiler.

"Why, I didn't know you were a church goer!" The New Brother was surprised.

"It is debatable," confessed the Old Tiler. "But on Christmas I like to go to church. Anyway, I had to see the rector. I had a turkey for someone who would need it. After church I got in the automobile and the chauffeur drove me to see Brother Fosdick and--

"Whoa! You have a car and chauffeur?" demanded the New Brother.

"Always on Christmas," grinned the Old Tiler. "Feel mighty important, too! But it's not mine, of course. A banker lends it to me."

"Oh!"

"I couldn't get around without a car," explained the Old Tiler. "So Brother Vandever lends me his. I called on old Brother Fosdick. He hasn't been in lodge in ten years, but he doesn't know it. He thinks he was at the last meeting, and will be there the next. His mind isn't as clear as it was. He orders me to vote on this and how to do that, and is so important about it that he has a good time, thinking he is still a power in the lodge. It's not much of a Christmas present, but it's what he likes best."

"Oh!" said the New Brother.

"Then I was driven to the Masonic Home. Had some toys for some pets and never can deny myself the pleasure of giving them.

"Pets?"

"Pets is the word. Two children of a brother of this lodge."

"Oh!"

"We had a riotous time, the kiddies and I. They showed me their tree and all their gifts and we played tag a while and they blew horns and it was real Christmas-like. It's a shame to take up so much of the children's time but I had a lot of fun and they were very kind, of course because I am old."

"Is that it?" said the New Brother.

"The big kick came in the afternoon. I made a few calls on sick and housed brethren, and then went to dinner. After dinner we got in the car and went to the orphan asylum, and I had the time of my life. We must have given away five hundred dollars in toys and games and books and dolls."

"You gave away five hundred dollars?"

"No, we did. I didn't pay for them. I am poor. Brother Vandever paid for them. All I did was buy them and take them there in Brother Vandever's car. He went along because he likes to."

"All you did was spend the money and distribute it and plan it. He just went along. I see," said the New Brother.

"Yes, I'd pay for part of them, but that would take some of the joy from Vandever," the Old Tiler explained happily. "We had fun. Then we went back to Brother Vandever's

home and he gave me a present — think of that! There it is!" The Old Tiler pointed to a handsome stick. "He's quite a wag, Brother Vandevere. He's already done so much for me, lending me the car and all. I had no present for him. I told him so. He said I had already given him Christmas, which was nonsense, because I hadn't given him anything. I hardly know where the day went. But I had a real good time. That's what Christmas is for, isn't it?"

"I always thought it was a day to get up late and laze around and stuff myself and go to bed disgusted," snapped the New Brother. "I think I'll try your scheme next time."

"There's plenty of room for you in the car," answered the Old Tiler. "I'd love to have you and so would Brother Vandevere. "

"Oh," said the New Brother, thoughtfully.

Old Tiler Talks by Carl H. Claudy The Temple Publishers, Washington, D.C. 1949

The Old Tiler first appeared in print in August, 1921 when the first of four hundred and fourteen "Old Tiler Talks" were printed in the *Fellowship Forum*, a fraternal newspaper published in Washington, D.

Posted on Thu, Dec. 23, 2004 in 'The Miami Herald'.

UP FRONT | BROWARD

S. Florida's last WWI vet turns 107

By SARA OLKON

Homer Anderson is among South Florida's most delicate of heroes. With failing kidneys and eyes too weak to read, he spends most days inside his Pompano Beach home, lost in the sound of television. Anderson is the last World War I-era veteran left in South Florida, and one of just 61 such American doughboys still alive, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs. He turns 107 on Christmas Eve.

Hedy Semmel, a clerk at the VA clinic in Oakland Park, noticed the date while scheduling his December medical appointment. She thought a party was in order. On Wednesday, 86-year-old daughter Bernice Ramsey wheeled him toward a pair of white, frosty cakes and a bowl filled with fruit punch. A news photographer's camera flash lit up his face, startling him slightly.

"When you get over 100 years old, well, you start to get old," he joked softly. He wears his hair closely cropped and leans toward colorful wool-blend suits. He declined to talk about the war in Iraq. Of his own service, he said simply, "I know I was there. I don't talk about it."

BALLOON OBSERVER

A widower since 1988, and a registered Republican since 1964, Anderson grew up the youngest of six boys and two girls in DuBois, Pa. He did road-survey work by horse and wagon before enlisting in the Army. He trained as an observer for a balloon squadron, which flew above battlefields to ferret out enemy troops and direct artillery fire. "We were afraid we would get shot down," he said matter-of-factly. The war ended before Anderson was sent overseas. He lost touch with other soldiers, all but a few of them long gone now.

After the war, he returned home to his job as a road surveyor. He met his wife, Mary, during an assignment in Ridgeway, Pa., and later worked as a highway and bridge engineer. The couple raised two daughters.

At 65, the Andersons retired to Florida. Ramsey says her father's deep reserve was largely shaped by dyslexia, something that went undiagnosed during his childhood. Today, his memories have been further vanquished by age.

DIDN'T STOP

Nevertheless, he has fared well for a man born in 1897. Four years ago, he slipped and fractured his hip while ushering at the Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Fort Lauderdale. He didn't stop working until services ended, then asked for a ride to the hospital. He still bathes and dresses himself. Up until last year, he played some golf. Now, he goes on walks, about a block a day, with the help of an aide.

Bad habits didn't cost him much. He drank and smoked when he was younger and still indulges in cakes and cookies. On Wednesday, he accepted two slices of birthday cake.

He grasped the wrist of a stranger and brightened considerably when asked about the tarnished gold ring on his left hand, marking him as a 32nd-Degree Mason -- perhaps the oldest Freemason alive. Asked his secret to longevity, Anderson didn't hesitate. "Faith in God."

Happy New Year, Homer.....n

Freemasons, Frogs and Centipedes

A Centipede was happy until a frog in fun said, "Pray which leg comes after which?" This raised her mind to such a pitch; she lay distracted in the ditch, considering how to run.

Are not we Freemasons playing centipede? On every hand we hear the croaking of what ails Freemasonry, while we metaphorically lie distracted in the ditch of our own indolence.

Our troubles would pass away like clouds in a summer sky if we started living Freemasonry instead of talking about it. The charge to a newly-installed Master contains the essence of Masonic instruction:

"When a man is said to be a Freemason the world at large may know that he is one to whom the burdened heart may pour forth its sorrow, whose hand is guided by justice and whose heart is expanded by benevolence."

Let us get up out of the ditch and go to work. There's lots to be done.
(J P Myers, British Columbia – in the California Freemason ca. 1968)

Jack took a long look at his speedometer before slowing down: 73 in a 55 zone. Fourth time in as many months. How could a guy get caught so often?

When his car had slowed to 10 miles an hour, Jack pulled over, but only partially. Let the cop worry about the potential traffic hazard. Maybe some other car will tweak his backside with a mirror.

The cop was stepping out of his car, the big pad in hand. Bob? Bob from the Lodge? Jack sunk farther into his trench coat. This was worse than the coming ticket. A cop catching a Brother Master Mason from his own Lodge. A guy who happened to be a little eager to get home after a long day at the office. A guy he was about to sit in Lodge with tomorrow.

Jumping out of the car, he approached a man he saw every Stated Meeting, a man he'd never seen in uniform.

"Hi, Bob. Fancy meeting you like this."

"Hello, Jack." No smile.

"Guess you caught me red-handed in a rush to see my wife and kids."

"Yeah, I guess." Bob seemed uncertain. Good.

"I've seen some long days at the office lately. I'm afraid I bent the rules a bit, just this once." Jack toed at a pebble on the pavement.

"Diane said something about roast beef and potatoes tonight. Know what I mean?"

"I know what you mean. I also know that you have a reputation in our precinct."

Ouch. This was not going in the right direction.

Time to change tactics. "What did you clock me at," "Seventy. Would you get back in your car please?"

"Now wait a minute here, Bob. I checked as soon as I saw you. I was barely nudging 65." The lie seemed to come easier with every ticket.

"Please, Jack, get in the car."

Flustered, Jack hunched himself through the still-open door. Slamming it shut, he stared at the dashboard. He was in no rush to open the window.

The minutes ticked by very slowly. Bob scribbled away on the pad. Why hadn't he asked for a driver's license? Whatever the reason, it would be a month of Sundays before Jack ever sat next this cop again at Lodge.

A tap on the door jerked his head to the left. There was Bob, a folded paper in hand Jack rolled down the window a mere two inches, just enough room for Bob to pass him the slip.

"Thanks." Jack could not quite keep the sneer out of his voice. Bob returned to his police car without a word. Jack watched his retreat in the mirror. Jack unfolded the sheet of paper. How much was this one going to cost? Wait a minute. What was this? Some kind of joke? Certainly not a ticket. Jack began to read:

"Dear Jack,

Once upon a time I had a daughter. She was six when killed by a car. You guessed it, a speeding driver. A fine and three months in jail, and the man was free. Free to hug his daughters, all three of them. I only had one, and I'm going to have to wait until Heaven before I can ever hug her again. A thousand times I've tried to forgive that man. A thousand times I thought I had. Maybe I did, but I need to do it again. Even now.

Please remember me in your devotions to Deity.

And please be careful, Jack, my son is all I have left."

"Fraternally, Bob"

Jack turned around in time to see Bob's car pull away and head down the road. Jack watched until it disappeared. A full 15 minutes later, he too, pulled away and drove slowly home, praying for forgiveness and hugging a surprised wife and kids when he arrived.

Life is precious. Handle with care. Drive safely and carefully. Remember, cars are not the only things recalled by their maker.

Sent to Cinosam by Brother Frank J. Kautz, II

A Stranger within

(Author Unknown)

A few months before I was born, my Dad met a stranger who was new to our small Tennessee town. From the beginning, Dad was fascinated with this enchanting newcomer and soon invited him to live with our family. The stranger was quickly accepted and was around to welcome me into the world a few months later. As I grew up, I never questioned his place in my family. In my young mind, he had a special niche.

My parents were complementary instructors: Mom taught me the word of God, and Dad taught me to obey it. But the stranger? He was our storyteller. He would keep us spellbound for hours on end with adventures, mysteries and comedies. If I wanted to know anything about politics, history or science, he always knew the answers about the past, understood the present and even seemed able to predict the future! He took my family to the first major league ball game. He made me laugh, and he made me cry. The stranger never stopped talking, but Dad didn't seem to mind.

Sometimes Mom would get up quietly while the rest of us were shushing each other to listen to what he had to say, and she would go to her room and read her books. (I wonder now if she ever prayed for the stranger to leave.) Dad ruled our household with certain moral convictions, but the stranger never felt obligated to honor them. Profanity, for example, was not allowed in our home... not from us, our friends or any visitors. Our longtime visitor, however, got away with four-letter words that burned my ears and made my dad squirm and my mother blush. My Dad was a teetotaler who didn't permit alcohol in the home, not even for cooking. But the stranger encouraged us to try it on a regular basis. He made cigarettes look cool, cigars manly and pipes distinguished. He talked freely (much too freely!) about sex. His comments were sometimes blatant, sometimes suggestive, and generally embarrassing. I now know that my early concepts about relationships were influenced strongly by the stranger. Time after time, he opposed the values of my parents, yet he was seldom rebuked... and NEVER asked to leave.

More than fifty years have passed since the stranger moved in with our family. He has blended right in and is not nearly as fascinating as he was at first. Still, if you were to walk into my parents' den today you would still find him sitting over in his corner, waiting for someone to listen to him talk and watch him draw his pictures.

His name?

We just call him TV.

Sent to Cinosam by Roger Main Faith Lodge #179 Mt. Ayr, IA

An elderly builder was ready to retire. He told his employer-contractor of his plans to leave the house building business and live a more leisurely life with his wife enjoying his extended family. He would miss the wages, but he needed to retire. They could get by.

The contractor was sorry to see his good worker go and asked if he could build just one more house as a personal favor. The builder said yes, but in time it was easy to see that his heart was not in his work. He resorted to shoddy workmanship and used inferior materials. It was an unfortunate way to end a dedicated career.

When the builder finished his work the employer came to inspect the house. He handed the front door key to the builder. "This is your house," he said, "my gift to you."

The builder was shocked! What a shame! If he had only known he was building his own house, he would have done it all so differently. So it is with us. We build our lives, a day at a time, often putting less than our best into the building.

Then with a shock we realize we have to live in the house we have built. If we could do it over, we'd do it much differently. But we cannot go back. You are the builder. Each day you hammer a nail, place a board, or erect a wall.

"Life is a do-it-yourself project," someone has said. Your attitudes and the choices you make today, build the "house" you live in tomorrow. Build wisely!

Sent to Cinosam by Stuart McK. Muirhead, P.M. Ayr, Scotland.

Geometric Bull

"Old Tiler Talks," by Carl Claudy

"There are a lot of things in Masonry," began the New Brother to the Old Tiler.

"Bravo!" cried the Old Tiler, sarcastically. "Who told you all that?"

"And some of them," continued the New Brother, "are more or less bull. I yield to no one in my love for the order, but I see its faults. And when I am expected to learn the science of geometry as a part of Masonry I know I am being bulled. There is no more sense to including geometry in the second degree than there would be including paleontology or..."

"I love to hear a man say he can see the faults of Masonry," interrupted the Old Tiler, "because then I am in the presence of a master mind. Generations of philosophers have made Masonry what it is. When a new brother can plainly see its faults he is greater than all of these."

"Of course I did not mean it that way. I just meant that I, er, you know..."

"Do I? Well, then I suppose I'd better not mince words about it. To say there is no sense to geometry in the second degree is to advertise the fact that you know nothing and care less for the symbolism of the order. Take from Masonry its symbolism and all you have left is a central thought with no means of expression. Imagine a great musician, deaf, blind, and paralyzed, his heart ringing with wonderful melodies and harmonies, yet unable to give them expression, and you have a mental picture of Masonry without symbolism. Symbolism is Masonry's means of expressing thought, and geometry, in the second degree, is not an arithmetical study, but a symbol.

"Geometry was an outgrowth of the first science. The first glimpse brute man had there was aught in nature but haphazard chance or the capricious doing of a superior overlord was when he learned the stupendous fact that two and two always make four.

"From that humble beginning and recognition of the master law of the universe-which is, that law is universal, unchanging, and invariable-grew the study of things; their surfaces, their areas, their angles, their motions, their positions. Modern methods have gone farther than Euclid, but his work was perfectly done and Euclid's geometry stands today as a perfect thing, as far as he took it.

"Geometry is the science of order. Reaching back to the first recognition that there was order in the world, it may stand for anyone who has eyes to see, as it does stand in Masonry, for man's recognition of God in the universe. It is a symbol of universality. By geometry we know that natural law on earth is nature's law for the stars. There have been few atheists in the world, but I venture to say that none of them have been geometers or astronomers. They know too much to deny the existence of the Great Geometer when seeing His work.

"Geometry is everywhere. It is in the snowflake's measured lines of crystallization. There is geometry of the honeycomb and a geometry of the cone of a fir tree. Mountains stand or fall as they obey or disobey the laws of geometry and the spider in her web and the planets in their orbits alike work according to the universal laws of geometry.

"I think God's thoughts after Him,' said the great astronomer Kepler, looking through his telescope and thinking of the geometry of the skies.

"If we know two angles and one dimension, we can find the other dimension. Man has angles and dimensions; and if we know enough of them we can find the rest. One of a man's angles is his love of Masonry. Given a real love of Masonry as one angle, a willingness to live her precepts as the other and we can tell what sort of a man he is now, used to be, and will be in the future.

"It is a real geometry the second degree commends to you, my brother, because it is a symbol of law and order, of Deity, of universality. But it is spiritual geometry which you should study rather than the propositions of Euclid, bearing in mind that they are symbols of that which Masonry most venerates, most wisely teaches, and most greatly loves.

"Our ancient brother Pythagoras discovered the wonderful demonstration of the Great Architect which is the forty-seventh problem of Euclid. And so when I hear a young squirt of a Mason, with his eyes barely opened to the long path which is Masonry winding through the stars to God, say that the geometry in the second degree is bull, I wish I were young enough to take him out in the back lot and treat him as I would a small boy who found humor in church and fun in sacred things, and..."

"Oh, stop!" cried the New Brother. "I was wrong. I didn't understand. Say, where can I get a geometry book? I want to know more about that forty-seventh problem."

"In the reading room," growled the Old tiler. "And, say, son, when you get it in your head, come back here and explain it all over again to me, will you?"

Away from the coast and cameras, victims cope without much help

By Brandon Bailey, Knight Ridder Newspapers *Sat Sep 3, 7:53 PM ET*

LUMBERTON, Miss. - It's been almost a week since Hurricane Katrina smashed its way across Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama, and folks here are beginning to wonder whether they've been blown off the map. Like thousands of her rural neighbors, 72-year-old Gloria Jean Watts said she sympathizes with those suffering in the coastal cities. But she's hot, hungry and almost out of blood pressure medicine after a week of camping in a neighbor's sweltering living room and subsisting on a diet of little more than canned sausages. "They've completely forgotten about this town," said Watts, who said she hasn't seen any state or federal aid workers since the storm hit her trailer home in nearby Wellstown, Miss., about 70 miles north of Gulfport. "It's a disgrace." While they escaped the devastating floods that hit Biloxi, Gulfport and New Orleans, inland residents suffered damage to their homes and have spent the last several days without power or phones - and perilously short of drinkable water and gasoline. But while state and local authorities, including some detachments from the Mississippi National Guard, are distributing ice, water and food in larger towns, the residents of smaller communities are helping one another. "They are getting food in town, but there are a lot of people out in the country who don't have enough gas to drive in," said Blythe Odom, a veterinarian who was waiting outside a store in Poplarville, Miss., on Saturday morning. She spent a day and a half earlier this week using a chainsaw to clear the trees that had blocked the road to her home.

People are queuing up for miles to buy gas for their cars and portable generators, but many gas stations are closed or open for only a few hours each day.

Some rural residents have neither cars nor generators. Many said they're cooking outside on wood fires and trying to get into nearby towns for supplies when they can. But many smaller stores haven't reopened because supply schedules have been disrupted and there's no electricity to operate refrigerators, cash registers or other appliances.

Local officials said they've been told that it will take at least a week and maybe as many as six weeks to restore power in the more remote communities.

"It's pretty rough. Everywhere you go, there are long lines," said Louis Sims, a stocky 60-year-old truck driver who'd driven into the small Mississippi community of Wiggins in search of supplies.

Construction worker Iren Jones, 23, was spending Saturday afternoon tending a campfire outside his damaged trailer home about 10 miles east of Poplarville. He had enough gasoline to drive to an emergency depot at the country fairground, where local officials have been handing out bags of ice and donated food.

Jones brought back several pounds of chicken, which he was planning to boil because he had no way to store it. "I'm not about to let it go to waste," he said.

About 20 miles north in Lumberton, Linda Lee said she was "furious" that she hasn't seen more assistance from the outside world.

There are 3,000 residents in Lumberton and about the same number living in the surrounding countryside, she said. There are equal numbers of blacks and whites, and most are very poor. About 85 percent of the schoolchildren qualify for subsidized lunches, said Lee, an administrator for the local school district.

Earlier in the week, Lee decided to make use of cafeteria food supplies that were thawing in school freezers. She donated them to the local Masonic lodge, which has been cooking meals on charcoal grills for residents every day.

In Lumberton, folks said the hero of the hurricane has been Chris Holzinger, a 28-year-old schoolteacher who's president of the local Masons. The day after Katrina hit, he unlocked the doors of the Masonic lodge and offered shelter to people who needed it.

"We've got a lot of people helping out," Holzinger said. He's lived most of his life in town, but his shaven head, goatee and tribal armband tattoo make him look more like he's from San Francisco.

Under an untucked polo shirt, Holzinger wore a small handgun on his hip - a precaution, he said, because there's been some looting of local stores, and everyone knows that food and water are being stored at the lodge.

"People are getting panicky. There's been some trouble," acknowledged town alderman Terry Canaday.

As he spoke, several police cars pulled up outside the Masonic lodge and members of the town's eight-member force began handing out bags of ice and cases of bottled water to about 150 people who quickly appeared from neighboring homes and buildings.

The supplies were gone in 10 minutes, but they were all that the locals could scrounge from a state emergency depot. Police Chief Mike Childress said he was hoping to persuade the National Guard to send more supplies and some soldiers to help distribute them.

For now, though, the residents of Lumberton are on their own.

"We've done all this so far without any help from the country or anyone else," Childress said.

Bailey reports for the San Jose Mercury News.

Take my hand, Brother; and be not afraid, you are not along
By Robert F. "Duke" Robbin

U. S. Interstate inbound.

Pushing my 18-wheeler at 65 MPH (then the legal speed) about fifteen miles from Los Angeles, I was all smiles. After six long months I was returning home from a distant location in Mobile, Alabama. The thought of being home with my wife and two sons had me tingling with joy. Then I saw him. He was old and looked half scared to death. He was standing alongside his automobile giving the "Grand Hailing Sign" over and over. Son of a gun, I was past him before I could pull over safely. I scanned my rear view mirrors hoping desperately to see someone come to the old man's assistance. Nothing. I felt myself wondering where all the members of the Craft were today. I glanced back once more. He was still valiantly and hopelessly seeking help. I sought out the next crossover and headed back. As I passed him I blew my air horn and waved an assuring hand. The old man seemed to collapse against the car. After making my turnaround I pulled up behind the stopped car and turned on my flashers. I didn't really know what to expect - someone dead or gravely ill maybe. The old man fell into my arms sobbing. Arm in arm we walked back to his car. Other than luggage, it was empty.

The long and short of it was simple. He had lost his wife several months ago and his daughter had persuaded him to come to Long Beach to share their home. But you must picture this. In his seventy five plus years he had resided in a very small Kansas town and had never been four hundred miles from home. Now lost, scared out of his wits, on an eight lane freeway with cars passing on all sides, he was near hysteria. As we stood there face to face I couldn't keep from laughing. His white linen shirt revealed a roll of money above his sleeve garter, where his bicep should have been.

"What's this, Pops?" I said as I touched the spot where the money was. "You a travelin' man ain'tcha?" His face searched mine.

"Mount Olive #506, right here in Los Angeles, Hiram."

Our hands met. His eyes twinkled with relief as he spurted out his Lodge back in Kansas. He dug out the roll of bills.

"Here, Hiram, take it - please. Hold it for me 'til I get to Sister's so's I won't lose it." I gripped him squarely by the shoulders. "Look, Pop, I want you to...."

That's all he let me get out, when "Oh, please, Hiram, Oh Dear God ... I can't drive on that thing," his thumb indicating the freeway. "Oh! Please don't leave me here."

"OK, OK, brother." I looked at the "No Riders" sign on my truck and shrugged my shoulders. Stuffing the old guy in my cab-over was no easy chore, but by the time I got up behind the wheel he was grinning like a school boy.

The bottom line was - getting off the freeway, calling his daughter, and waiting for their arrival.

In the interim, my new found brother and I found a small cafe and as we sipped our coffee the story trickled out. He had owned a two-chair barber shop. Raised eight children. A boy had been killed at Iwo Jima. A daughter and her boy friend were coming home from a football game and were killed at a grade crossing by a train. The voice trailed off. We sat silently, and the old man stared into his coffee as if seeking an answer. Suddenly his family arrived. After the "Hellos," after I gave "Sister" the money, after we retrieve the car, as if as an afterthought, the old man straightens up, "I was Master of my Lodge, son, did I tell you that?" With that he turned and got into Sister's car.

I climbed into my rig and forty-five minutes later was in the yard at Warner Brothers Studio. I took my luggage over to my car where the hugging and kissing makes

homecoming so sweet.

"You're almost two hours late, Honey," my wife said, "What happened?"

"Had to help my brother get squared away."

From the back seat came a squeal of glee from my oldest. 'You're a trip, Dad, always joking. You know you were an only kid. He's putting you on, Mom, he ain't got no brother."

They couldn't see my smile in the dark.

Recently I saw a Studebaker at an antique auto show. A real gussied up 1948 Studebaker bullet nosed sedan. The model that was the peak of Studebaker styling - shortly before it ceased all vehicle production. It looked mint. The body panels were fair and smooth. The paint was perfect and well shined. The tires were new. The windows were clear and unblemished.

I asked the owner how it ran --- He said seldom!! He explained that replacement parts were hard to find and buy, it did not meet current emission standards, and, as a showpiece, he was unwilling to subject it to use and exposure that might result in damage. Further he explained, he was not willing to substitute parts, like an engine, transmission or rear end, from other manufacturers that would enable him to use the car, or at least keep it running. These parts, he said, even though unseen, would change the car from what it was to something else even though it would be more usable and give it a longer life.

As I listened to the owner's remarks, I suddenly thought "This guy is talking about Masonry." The setting was appropriate - a collection of antiques assembled so that the curious could appreciate the craftsmanship of a bygone era, at least the outside part they could see. The situation similar - A prestigious name but the supply of parts inadequate to replace those lost to the ravages of age, and unable to operate without restriction in its current environment. The attitude of the owner was true antiquarian -- Limit exposure that might result in damage, and NO SUBSTITUTION OF PARTS ---- even though they would strengthen the structure and add to its life.

The similarities between the Studebaker and Masonry were startling. It was apparent the owner and I were of different philosophies: The owner desired to maintain a museum piece which chronicled the perfection of a certain vehicle and manufacturer at a certain time; while I, on the other hand, would retain the outward appearance and the basic structural elements used as a foundation for the vehicle, and substitute new parts and materials necessary to extend it's usable life.

These differences are reflected in Masonic thought today. Is Masonry to become the Studebaker of Fraternities?

Bro. Charles Munro, PM, Canton Lodge, No. 98, Tyler, Texas

I met a man the other day and noticed the ring on his finger was that with a square and compass emblazoned in the crest. I stopped immediately and pondered this singular circumstance.

Here was a gentleman that I could tell a lot about on the spot. I knew, for instance; that this person was a man of honor, of good character and well recommended by his Brethren.

I knew if he was married, he was a good and loving husband. If he had children, he was an attentive and caring father.

I knew for sure that he was a law abiding person with a healthy respect for the jurisprudence of his city, state and nation. A patriotic soul who would defend this great country with his life if need be.

I was rather certain that he had that reverential awe for the Creator and held the belief that there is a gift to man yielded to us from above by the power of prayer, a church going type with the opinion that there is a Brotherhood of man through the Fatherhood of God and the soul will continue into eternity.

Here was a man that I could trust to protect my wife, sister, mother or daughter without question, from any harm that might beset them.

I thought of him as a confidant that would give good advice when asked and keep my deepest secrets when told to him as such.

All this came to me as I pondered the square and compass on his ring, then it dawned on me- -----I didn't even know his name.

Author unknown